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December 1995

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IMAGE BY BEVERLY GARDNER OF ORIGIN

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108 Guided Tour: Bad Mojo

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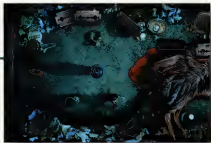
So you wake up, and suddenly insecticide is worse than Kryptonite—because you're a cockroach! No problem, though. Our Guided Tour will help you scuttle through this unique adventure game without losing a single antenna off your head.



This one-piece Compaq PC resembles a consumer electronics component, page 26.



Don't let Bad Mojo bug you, see our Guided Tour, page 108.



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savies screens,
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Electronic Entertainment[®]

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 12

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178 3-D Starts to Get Real

You've played 'em in the arcades for years, and now 3-D games are coming to the PC, thanks to a new crop of affordable 3-D accelerator cards that really do the job.

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Shut up that modem, find Windows 95 tips on the World Wide Web, and get back to good of DOS.

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USA International consumer magazine membership applied for December 1995.



= See related demo on the E2 CD-ROM

Silence your squawking modem, S.O.S., page 186.



December 1995



Fredric Paul

Coming Attractions!

When you go to the music store, you've probably already heard a song or two from the CD you want to buy. Maybe a friend played it for you, but more than likely you heard the song on the radio or saw the video on MTV. Either way, you're not plunking down your cash to buy a disc based solely on its packaging or advertisements; you have some idea of what you're getting.

Same thing with the movies. Odds are you've already seen a film clip on a TV commercial or a *Siskel and Ebert* review, or maybe you saw a trailer the last time you were at the theater. Again, the key is that you've had a chance to check out the content before making a decision to buy it.

But when it comes to computer entertainment, there's no equivalent preview mechanism. True, some games—like *Doom* and *Descent*—have shareware versions, and other companies sell demo versions for a couple of bucks. In most cases, though, when you buy a new game or multimedia title, you've probably never seen the thing in action.


That's why last November, we began bundling each newsstand copy of *Electronic Entertainment* with a PC and Mac CD-ROM full of game demos and multimedia-title previews. The disc has been so well received that we're making it available to all our subscribers as well (send in the offer card you received or call 800-688-4575).

Subscribing to the magazine with the CD-ROM costs a little more, but it can save you big money at the software store. Pop the disc into your computer, and you can actually play demos and watch previews of the latest and greatest games and multimedia titles. You'll know what you're getting before you shell out \$50 or more for the latest software.

Our disc offers some 20 DOS, Windows, and Macintosh games and entertainment titles each month. This issue, for example, look for *Apache*, *Magic Carpet II*, *Primal Rage*, and many others. A "Demo On Disc!" icon in the magazine will alert you when there's a related demo on the CD-ROM.

But that's not all. We give you contact numbers to reach industry vendors as well as an interactive fax-back survey. Use it to tell us what you think about the magazine—and to qualify for great prizes. A special shopping area called *Whole Nu World* lets you order products right from the disc. And this month, we offer instant Internet access that will let you surf the World Wide Web without having to give out your credit-card number or commit to an online service.

In the coming months, we'll be working to integrate the disc and the magazine more closely. In fact, the success of the CD-ROM is one big reason we're altering the name of the magazine. Beginning with the January 1996 issue, we'll be known as *PC Entertainment*.

Don't look for big changes inside the magazine, though. We chose the new name simply to better reflect our concentrated coverage of PC and Mac games, multimedia, and online entertainment. Have fun! 



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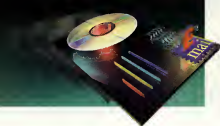
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Letters

Mac Meisters

Electronic Entertainment is the only magazine that pays a respectable amount of attention to the Macintosh gaming world. Other magazines give the Macintosh token coverage at best. In addition, your magazine's free CD-ROM includes PC and Mac games.

The Mac gaming world is enjoying a period of unprecedented growth, and the Macintosh is finally maturing into a capable multimedia and gaming machine in its own right. Kudos to *E2*, which I gladly recommend to my fellow Mac gamers.

Marton Canungay
martonc@world.com

Windows 95 Bashing

Electronic Entertainment's September issue jumps the gun in its rush to heap praise upon Windows 95. In your "Cyberspace: 1995" story, you say Microsoft Network's ability to create Windows aliases from any World Wide Web address for that site is "a radical innovation." IBM's WARP Web Explorer has not only allowed users to drag a URL icon to a window or desktop to access that site, but also allowed them to drag and drop the icon on Web Explorer. In addition, Netscape has a similar capability.

Also, if the Microsoft Network (MSN) belongs in your feature, why isn't IBM's Internet Access Kit also included? Just like MSN in Windows 95, the Access Kit is supplied with the WARP operating system. However, IBM doesn't force you to use IBM's Advantis network exclusively. You can use the Kit virtually with any Internet Access Provider. The world does not revolve solely around Mr. Gates and Microsoft.

J.R. Link
jlink@best.com

OS/2 WARP and Netscape both allow icon creation, but that ability has never been shared by any of the commercial online services—the focus of our story. Similarly, we concentrated on services that aim to provide their own content, while Advantis merely offers an Internet pathway.

—Ed.

Tough Love

I think you have a great magazine, and I look forward to every issue. However, you need to be much more critical in your game reviews. It's very hard to decide which game to buy when all the game reviews receive five stars! Only games that are true classics should receive the five-star award.

Kevin Hocky
kevinhocky@aol.com

You're right, Kevin. Only the great games should get 5s, and we try to keep a critical eye trained on every game we review. In our last issue, for example, we awarded PC and Mac games one 5, one 4.5, four 4s, four 3.5s, three 3s, a pair of 2s, and a 1.5.

—Ed.

Control & Cheats

In response to Fredric Paul's September Editor's Page ("Total Control," page 4), I do enjoy video in games, but I want the ability to stop the video. It frustrates me to have to wait for an entire sequence to finish. I don't want to return to the days of text adventures, but sometimes I enjoyed those games more than today's souped-up titles. At least they were easier to install.

Also, I loved Christopher Lindquist's column "Cheater" (September, page 36). Finally, someone who supports cheats. I don't have the reflexes or the time to complete every game. Some nights you just want to blow something up; no hassles, you're God for 20 minutes. For those who don't believe in cheats, don't use them.

kempton@databank.com

Raging Debate

Bill Meyer's feature "Is It a Movie, Or Is It a Game?" (September, page 42) was quite insightful. There is a raging debate within the industry about how much movie-like video should affect game play. Some people believe that the movie portions hinder the game, while others feel it addresses a larger audience and therefore makes games potentially more profitable.

I think that interactive movie/games will

become their own genre. Until then, these titles will experience growing pains associated with producing larger-budget games.

Eric Peterson, Origin Systems
epeterson@origin.ae.com

Right Out of the Box

First, I would like to say that I like your magazine and think your free CD-ROM is great. But, in the September issue ("Compaq's PC Toybox," page 22), you reviewed a Compaq Presario CDTV desktop system. This system is a prime example of how the unsuspecting public is misled about what the state of the art in gaming systems is.

The reviewer said that this system had no upgrade path for the video card and that the sound card was only Sound Blaster-compatible. And other than cheesy little speakers with no volume control, the monitor was nothing to write home about either.

If you want to do a service to your readers, explain the basics of what to look for in components and why. These computers in a box rip off the general consumer. All the serious game players I know have custom systems that are ordered or built by computer shops. Soon, Joe Public will see that he has been lied to about these ready-made systems.

Larry A. Kruse
New Orleans, LA

The Compaq Presario you refer to received a rating of 3.5 stars—the equivalent of a C+. As we noted, the box had a limited upgrade path and a price that would scare away many buyers.

While it is certainly possible to save money with a custom-built system, name-brand PCs offer service and support that may be important to many people.

—Ed.

Got something you want to get off your chest? Do it! Write, fax, or e-mail us at: Letters to the Editor, c/o Electronic Entertainment, 951 Mariner's Island Blvd., Suite 700, San Mateo, CA 94404; fax: 415-349-7781; Internet address, e2Letters@iftw.com; and CompuServe: 73361.265.

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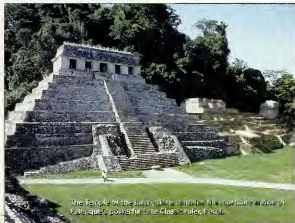


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SHARP

EDGE
Maya World and Welcome to It

The Temple of the Great Sun contains the mortuary statue of Yalencque's powerful late Classic ruler, K'abal Xook.



Stylized animals and people adorn the walls of architecture from the Mayan period.

The Mayans haven't ruled Mexico's Yucatan peninsula or present-day Central America for a millennia, but a new CD-ROM from Sumeria will offer a multimedia look at their fascinating culture.

Using advanced technology,

including QuickTime VR, Exploring The Lost Maya offers a Visual Overview and then uses an engaging and well-integrated interface to concentrate on Mayan history, culture, and their archeological legacy. The History section places photos, text, and video clips in an interactive timeline running from 1000 B.C. to 1500 A.D. The Sites section contains interactive maps of the region and of individual sites. Click on the Ancient Culture section for a 3-D fly around and explanations of how the Mayans built their impressive pyramids, plus a lot more.

Like MECC's upcoming MayaQuest CD-ROM for kids (which we previewed January 1995, Sharp Edge, page 11), Exploring the Lost Maya doesn't focus on the collapse of the Mayan civilization. Instead, it presents an intriguing look at this sophisticated people—and will survey the ruins and icons they left behind. (Sumeria; 415-904-0800; \$49.95) —Ann M. Marcus

Platform: Mac/Win/Win 95 CD
Available: February 1996

My Kind of Town



Beta testers used these pieces to track the World Chess Championships.

Everybody needs someplace they can call home, even if it's a virtual home. For some people, that place may just be **AlphaWorld**, the latest 3-D space from Worlds Inc.

AlphaWorld builds on Worlds Inc.'s 3-D Internet chat client Worlds Chat, which debuted earlier this year. The new space lets you move

through the environment using the same first-person Doom-like perspective and talk with other people, but now you can also reserve some virtual real estate to build anything you want using AlphaWorld's library of predefined objects. Eventually, you'll be able to import your own art and create your own appearance. What's more, you'll be able to link any site you build to any World Wide Web page simply by including

the appropriate URL address. Best of all, none of this puts a heavy strain on your system; we found that moving and rendering in AlphaWorld works well even with a 14.4Kbps modem on a 486 PC. (A Mac version should follow shortly.)

Community gatherings proved popular in the beta-testing stage of AlphaWorld. You'll also find a newspaper—the *New World Times*—which you can get to by clicking on any newspaper box, or you can read it at the Worlds Inc. Web page. Eventually AlphaWorld will expand to include shopping areas sponsored by AlphaWorld corporate members. Although there may be a charge eventually, the software is free for now. Give this world a whirl by downloading the software from <http://www.worlds.net/alphaworld> (Worlds Inc.; 800-446-3636)

—Donald St. John



A nice little pavilion in the making.

Platform: Windows
Available: Now

CD Game Consoles Go Online

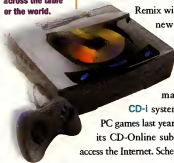
The online revolution won't be confined to computers much longer. Eyeing the explosive growth of online services and the Internet, the makers of CD-ROM-based console systems are scrambling to launch their units into cyberspace.

Sega was first, announcing its

plans to ready an enhanced Saturn for shipment in April 1996 that

will include a modem and telecommunications software. It will cost some 40 percent more than the base unit (which was just reduced to \$299). In another move that signals the convergence of CD-ROM consoles and computers, the company announced that it will port some of its Genesis and Saturn games to Pentium-based PCs running Windows 95. Look for Ecco the Dolphin, Tomcat Alley, and Comix Zone to make the transition this fall, while Virtua Fighter

An enhanced Sega Saturn will soon let you play across the table or the world.



INTERNET

Remix will be bundled with the new Diamond Edge 3D accelerator PC card from Diamond Multimedia.

Philips Media, makers of the fading CD-i system, also began releasing PC games last year and is now working with its CD-Online subsidiary to let CD-i users access the Internet. Scheduled to launch this fall in

the U.K. and throughout Europe next year, the scheme comprises a television set, CD-i player, special modem, and CD-Online disc.

While Sony has made no announcements of similar plans for its PlayStation, 3DO originally pitched its Multiplayer as a set-top controller for interactive television, and claimed that

Philips's CD-i is online now.



gamers would be able to play each other online. But interactive TV has been slow to take off, and a promised 3DO modem from AT&T evaporated when the phone company's interest in the platform waned. The Multiplayer is now positioned purely as a game machine, and many 3DO game developers—including Crystal Dynamics and hardware



3DO scrapped the online option for its Multiplayer.

—Fredric Paul

Blues on the Bus

What could be cooler than hanging out with B.B. King, listening to this blues great's music, and learning about his roots? On The Road With B.B. King gives you the chance to do just that. Billed as an interactive biography, it's a musical road trip through King's life and times.

Hop on B.B.'s tour bus—Big Red—to visit significant locations: Memphis's Beale St., circa 1950; Lucille's Place, where his musical influences are detailed; his hometown of Indianola, Mississippi; and B.B.'s Los Angeles blues club. Along the way, sit back and listen to him spin stories, each one illustrated by a fine artist.

To make the experience truly authentic, MCA Records spent three days shooting with B.B., partly on location in Memphis, and recorded some 30 hours of interviews. And unlike some discs, On The Road will be full of music—including performances by artists that B.B. influenced. The music plays continuously, not just when you click on an object. (MCA Records; 800-431-9015; \$39-\$49)

—Fredric Paul

Platform: Win/Mac CD

Available: January 1996

Everybody's Online

In 1994, nearly **5 million** people were hooked to commercial online services.

Today, that figure is closer to **8 million**, and in 1997, it's projected to reach **10 million**.

Source: Forrester Research Inc.



news
FLASH

■ The CD-ROM digizine **Blender**, utilizing multimedia to cover the latest in pop culture, music, fashion, and movies, has set up links in its CD-ROM magazine to the youthful commercial online service **Transom**. With a modem and a mouse click, you'll automatically access Transom's service featuring original online columnists, multiple news sources such as *USA Today*, consumer magazines, and discussion groups. In addition, Transom offers full Internet access with five free online hours, allowing **Blender** readers to cruise the World Wide Web via Netscape Navigator.

■ Don't want to shell out the money for a PC or Mac to get you onto the Internet? But you still want to get involved in the big communications revolution? Well, **Sun Microsystems** may have a solution. Sun chairman Scott McNeely wants to develop a **dedicated machine** that'll get you onto the **Net** but won't carry the premium of a decked-out computer system. He envisions a box with just a screen, a keyboard, the chips, and the communication ports necessary to jack in—all for only a few hundred dollars. Probably not coincidentally, such a machine would be ideal for use with "applets"—little pop-up utility programs that perform their function and then go away—written in Sun's increasingly popular Java programming language.

■ **Sirius Publishing** of Scottsdale, Ariz., producer of the 5-ft. 10-Pak CD-ROM strip, is now shipping a new collection, the **5-ft. 10-Pak Collector's**

continued on page 16



A more delightful actor, funnyman, and cook would be hard to find. Now, Dom DeLuise has brought his talent and wit to CD-ROM in *Cooking with Dom DeLuise* from Allegro New Media (see our review in this issue on page 30). *Reviews* editor Ann Marcus caught up with the larger-than-life star by phone.

Electronic Entertainment: How was making a CD-ROM different from the other things you've done?

Dom DeLuise: It was a gigantic job. It was like trying to hold water in a sieve, and no matter what we did, they'd say, "Oh, that's fine, now we need a hundred more [recipes] just like that!" We needed tips and we went shopping, and it went on and on and on...but of course not all of it was serious. We tried to keep it energetic and spontaneous and a little funny.

E2: Oh, it's very funny. Did you film it in your kitchen?

DD: Oh no, we made such a mess, my wife Carol would have killed me. You don't wanna know the mess...We did it in a friend's kitchen. I would be making dish after dish and I would glance off camera and someone had already eaten it and was washing up. We had a great crew, and that really made all the difference.

E2: Did you envision a home-maker slaving over a hot stove when you were doing this?

DD: No, I have a feeling...I think people do what I do. They read cookbooks in bed, which I do. Say I was gonna make bouillabaisse—it's a fish dish—I wouldn't just read one

recipe, I'd read three or four and then pull out the ingredients that I want to use.

E2: Then will people miss anything by not being able to bring the computer into bed with them?

DD: No, but wherever they're looking at it, they should be relaxed. Also, I think people want to keep the cooking time short and see what's actually happening. You've seen those shows, right, when they say, "And now you pour in half a cup of wine," and they already have it set aside in a little dish. I like to show it happening and I love to say, "Now carefully measure half a cup of wine," and you see me pouring in half a bottle of wine! [Laughs] You have to break the rules a little.

E2: Do you have a computer at home? With a CD-ROM drive?

DD: Yes, I have the computer; no, there's no CD-ROM drive yet. I use the computer all the time for writing. I write children's books.

E2: Do you have any entertainment titles or games?

DD: No, but my son Peter loves that stuff. Y'know, there's a guy in a cave and a monster and a...I don't know...he loves that stuff.

I'm doing one now with Christopher Lloyd. I play a dog (Virgin Interactive Entertainment's *Toon Struck*)...Oh it's just amazing what they do.

They reverse images, they combed Christopher Lloyd's hair in the middle

and made the collar the same on both sides, the jacket had no buttons, so that they could flip the picture and he could be left or right and you'd never know. They went to a lot of expense, it's gonna be fabulous.



Michael & Lisa Marie ?

Why do most child
stars end up in
the slammer?

Will it really make
me go blind?

*Life's
Greatest
Mysteries*

Barney?

What's in those
cocktail weenies
anyway?

Double Switch



Let's face it. Life's full of mysteries. Some just have better plots. Take Double Switch, for example. It's a mystery adventure that features over 20 twisted characters who you follow through an even more twisted plot. By controlling the action throughout the game, you carry out your mission to save the main character, Eddie, who's trapped in the basement. Only with his help can you find the hidden treasure that shrouds the mansion in intrigue. And only then will you uncover other spell-binding mysteries of Double Switch. Like, whatever happened to Corey Haim, for instance.



DOUBLE SWITCH



AVAILABLE ON WINDOWS® 95 CD-ROM, MACINTOSH CD-ROM AND SEGA SATURN. SEE YOUR LOCAL RETAILER. 1-800-332-0032
[HTTP://WWW.0101PIX.COM](http://www.0101PIX.COM) Double Switch is a trademark of Digital Pictures, Inc. © 1993, 1994 © 1995 Digital Pictures, Inc. All rights reserved. All other brand or product names are trademarks or registered trademarks and are the property of their respective owners.

news
FLASH

Edition. Retailing for \$39.95, it includes multimedia titles from several publishers: Exploring Windows 95 from LearnKey, Webster's Concise Encyclopedia from Attica, Dragon's Lair from ReadySoft, The Journeyman Project Turbo from Sanctuary Woods, Dr. Ruth's Encyclopedia of Sex from Creative Multimedia, ♣ Interactive from Graphix Zone, Introduction to Classical Music from Attica, Mad Dog McCree from IBM, and Sing-Along Kids: Vol. 3 from Sirius Publishing, as well as SiriusNet, an Internet access tool. (Sirius Publishing; 800-247-0307)

■ Catch the tail end of Media Renaissance's **First Festival of Independent Audio/Visual Arts Online—FIVA ONLINE 95.** It runs through December 1 on the World Wide Web at <http://www.fivaonline.com>. The festival presents more than 150 works of art (digital video, animation, imagery, and interactive multimedia) by 50 independent artists in both competitive and non-competitive gallery formats. (Mark Benthin, Festival Director, benthin@montreal.com or 514-490-3448)

■ Having trouble getting your eyeliner on straight? Don't know whether the blush goes above or below your cheekbone? Fear not: These and other nagging makeup conundra are about to be addressed by Marc Multimedia in its soon to be released **Makeup Made Easy**, which will reportedly be the "most comprehensive instructional and reference information available to teach women of all

continued on page 17

CyberHOT The Holidays Online CyberNOT

Ho ho ho, deck those halls, light the menorah, make a sacrifice, or whatever...yes, the holidayze are upon us! Time to feel the spirit—or at least sip some. Of course, we all celebrate the season in our own way. And the World Wide Web can help. A few of the year-end pages get coal in their stockings, but the rest are brimming with good cheer.

Kwanzaa Information Center

<http://www.melanet.com/melanet/kwanzaa/kwanzaa.html>

A detailed, lucid explanation of the African-American winter holiday. Good for those of every race.

#wicca Home Page

<http://www.computel.com/~tygress/wiccahp.html>

Why do pagans venerate Yule, the winter solstice? Selena Fox's "I Am Pagan" explains it all, as well as the Celtic foundations of other familiar holidays.

Uncle Bob's Christmas Page

<http://gagme.www.com/~boba/christmas.html>

From the same guy who hings you the excellent Uncle Bob's Kids Page comes a compendium of cool seasonal links, snippets of favorite poems and stories, and a list of carols the way a hureaucrat would sing 'em.

Hanukkah: Festival of Lights

<http://www.ort.org/ort/hanukkah/1.htm>

This simple, effective page gives you the history and ways of this Jewish celebration that commemorates an ancient victory and a miracle. Keep those lights burning.

Santa's MH-2600 Cyber-Sleigh**Prototype**

<http://christmas.com/sleigh-stats.html>

Who knew Santa was a secret gearhead? Did you know that his hot-rod sleigh was made of a three-mineral alloy (mithril-vibranium-adamantium) that shields it from radar and that it packs a 12-disc CD changer? Wow.

Leviathan's Season's Greetings

<http://leviathan.tamu.edu/xmasgr.html>

Oh, dear, are we really criticizing a Christmas greeting? Well, yes, when it's this gratuitously environmentally conscious, socially responsible, low-stress, nonaddictive, gender-neutral, and politically correct.

SANTA CLAUSE EXPOSED!!

<http://walnutholli.com/~pelicore/wait-santa.html>

Really, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus... no matter what this nitwit thinks. For doughters only.

Yule Carols

<http://plasma.physics.lehigh.edu:8080/afs/Whispering-Trees/yule.carols.html>

You know the carols, but not these rewritten solstice lyrics: "Gods Rest Ye Merry Pagan Folk" doesn't quite have the right ring to it. Does anybody out there want to try some original tunes?

Christmas 2000 or Spot's Third First Christmas

<http://ccnga.uwaterloo.ca/~rkeltma/xmas2000.html>

The bizarre hypertext adventures of a stupid puppy named Spot, this only has a happy Xmas ending if you cheat and jump ahead. A stream-of-consciousness jumble that reads like one.

White Christmas

<http://www.hyperion.com:80/~koreth/christmas.html>

This dark Christmas short story could have made an interesting episode of The Twilight Zone. Its view of children is a bit twisted for our taste, but you may find it oddly compelling.

—Compiled by Donald St. John

Batman!



relatively speaking -it's weird

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the real-time-lip-syncing-
weird-making-hands-
shaking-laugh-cracking-fun
computer game from SCi...

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105 locations...

in theory, it's weird.



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Leader

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MechWarrior 2 is armed and ready at No. 1 on the PC Games chart.



Part spooky, part steamy, **Phantasmagoria** lands at No. 4 on the PC Games chart.

PC Games

RATING	TITLE	LAST MONTH	MONTHS ON CHART	#2 RATING
1	MechWarrior 2 Align with the mighty Wolf or Raven Clan to do battle in an assortment of awesome Mechs. One of the best games of '95. (Activision; 800-477-3550; DOS CD, \$59.95)	—	1	*****
2	Microsoft Flight Simulator 5.1 Upgraded graphics and new features keep this hugely popular flight sim flying high. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; DOS, DOS CD, \$59.95)	1	2	*****1/2
3	Myst Stunning visuals, haunting audio, and intriguing puzzles keep this unique adventure game perpetually near the top of the Leader Board. (Bruderbund; 800-521-6263; Win CD, \$54.95)	2	16	*****
4	Phantasmagoria Adrenne's dream home in the country turns into a hellish nightmare in Sierra's full-motion-video adventure game. (Sierra On-Line; 800-757-7707; Win/DOS CD, \$69.95)	—	1	*****1/2
5	NASCAR Racing Buckle up in a monster stock car and enjoy meeting racing in Papirus's follow-up to IndyCar Racing. (Papirus; 800-636-1629; DOS, street price \$44.95; DOS CD, street price \$34.95)	5	5	****
6	The Ultimate Doom Thy Flesh Consumed All three original episodes of Doom, as well as rare previous levels on one action-packed CD-ROM. (GT Interactive; 800-332-4300; DOS CD, \$30)	—	1	—
7	Dark Forces A clever twist on the Doom concept, featuring greater strategy and a cast of Star Wars characters. (LucasArts Entertainment; 800-782-7927; DOS CD, street price \$44.95)	3	5	****
8	Star Trek: The Next Generation "A Final Unity" Takes the helm of the <i>Enterprise</i> and prevent Civil War on the planet Gard. (Spectrum HoloByte; 800-695-4263; DOS CD, \$60)	—	1	****
9	Doom II This hair-raising sequel has more than 30 levels, seven hellish new creatures, and a double-barreled shotgun. (GT Interactive; 800-332-4300; DOS, DOS CD, street price \$40-\$50)	4	10	*****
10	Links 386 CD Photo-realistic courses and players as well as humorous sound bites set apart this groundbreaking golf game. (Access Software; 800-800-4880; DOS CD, \$49.95)	—	1	****

Mac Games

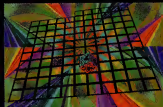
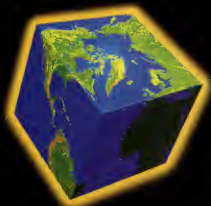
RATING	TITLE	LAST MONTH	MONTHS ON CHART	#2 RATING
1	Dungeon Master II The long-awaited sequel to the original role-playing hit, featuring computer enemies that really think, improved graphics and sound, and real-time combat. (Interplay; 800-969-4863; Mac CD, \$39.95)	—	1	****
2	Doom II Doom arrives on the Mac in this hair-raising sequel, complete with more than 30 levels and seven hellish new creatures. (GT Interactive; 800-332-4300; Mac CD, street price \$40-\$50)	8	2	****1/2
3	Dark Forces A clever twist on the Doom concept, featuring greater strategy and a cast of Star Wars characters—now on the Mac. (LucasArts Entertainment; 800-782-7927; Mac CD, street price \$44.95)	2	2	****1/2
4	Myst Stunning visuals, haunting audio, and intriguing puzzles keep this unique adventure game perpetually near the top of the Mac chart. (Bruderbund; 800-521-6263; Mac CD, \$54.95)	1	21	*****
5	Top Ten Mac Pak Ten of Electronic Arts' golden oldies in an assortment of categories, including PGA Tour II and Chuck Yeager's Air Combat. (Electronic Arts; 800-245-4595; Mac CD, street price \$29.95-\$34.95)	—	1	****
6	Rebel Assault Intense 3-D graphics and funous Star Wars action highlight Rookie One's first action/adventure. (LucasArts Entertainment; 800-782-7927; Mac CD, \$19.95)	4	10	****
7	F/A-18 Hornet 2.0 Better graphics, improved flight characteristics, and the Korean Crisis add-on make Hornet 2.0 one of the best Mac flight sims. (Graphic Simulations; 800-580-4723; Mac, Power Mac, \$45)	—	4	*****
8	Links Pro CD Macintosh Photo-realistic courses and players as well as humorous sound bites set this groundbreaking golf game apart. (Access Software; 800-800-4880; Mac CD, \$69.95)	6	7	****
9	SimCity 2000 Build your own city of the future with this improved version of the classic urban-simulation game. (Maxis; 800-336-2947; Mac, \$49.95; Mac CD, \$69.95)	3	21	*****
10	SimCity 2000 CD Collection Complete with SimCity 2000, Great Disasters Vol. One, The Urban Renewal Kit, and several bonus cities, you'll be a master planner in no time. (Maxis; 800-336-2947; Mac CD, \$69.95)	—	1	*****

Multimedia Entertainment Titles

RATING	TITLE	LAST MONTH	MONTHS ON CHART	#2 RATING
1	Microsoft Encarta Experience the world through video segments, audio clips, animation, and tons of text in this high-tech encyclopedia. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; Win CD, Mac CD, \$99.95)	3	18	****
2	Disney's Animated StoryBook: The Lion King Your kids can revisit Simba the lion and friends in an interactive storybook based on the Disney hit. (Disney Interactive; 800-688-1520; Win CD, \$32.95)	1	9	***
3	Oregon Trail II Hitch up the wagon and travel the famous and often treacherous Oregon Trail of the mid-to late 1800s en route to the West Coast. (MECC; 800-685-6322; Win CD, Mac CD, street price, \$59.95)	5	2	*****
4	Street Atlas USA Find your way easily with a myriad of search options in the newest version of the top street-mapping program. (DeLorme Mapping; 800-452-5531; Win CD, \$79)	2	2	****
5	Aladdin Activity Center A collection of games, puzzles, and art activities based on Disney's animated film Aladdin. (Disney Interactive; 800-228-0568; Win CD, Mac CD, \$30)	4	6	****

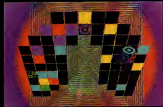
Leader Board is a compilation of top-selling computer games and multimedia entertainment titles in 1,300 retail stores for August 1995. It excludes multi-CD packs, which are generally composed of older titles. Source: PC Data.

PLAY MORE. FEEL BETTER.



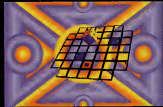
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Electronic entertainment

FAX SURVEY

Please indicate whether you read and/or how useful you found each of the following articles from this issue of *Electronic Entertainment*. Circle "All" if you read the entire article, "Some" if you read part of the article, and "None" if you did not read the article. If you read any part of the article, please let us know how useful it was by circling "5" for "very useful" to "1" for "not at all useful."

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1) How did you get this copy of *Electronic Entertainment*?

- ☐ Subscribed
☐ Purchased at the newsstand
☐ Other _____

Editor's Page	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Letters	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Sharp Edge	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Leader Board	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Spotlight	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Edutainment	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
The Ref	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Wirehead	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Multimaniac	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
PCs Fight Back	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Holiday Gift Guide	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Online Gaming	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Location, Location, Location—VR	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Guided Tour: Bad Mojo	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Game News	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Crusader: No Remorse	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Frankenstein	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Ripper	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Panic in the Park	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Spycraft/Preview	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Lords of Midnight	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Riddle of Master Liu	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Apache	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
EF2000/Preview	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Al Unser Jr.	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Arcade Racing	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1

Indy Car 2	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Command & Conquer	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Steel Panthers	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Monopoly	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Quirks	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Pitfall	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Magic Carpet II	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Hexan	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Ultimate Football 95	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
NHL 96	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
FIFA 96	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Gemstone III	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Game Shorts	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
CD Console Games	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
3-D Starts to Get Real	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Our Multimedia	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Fantasy	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
S.O.S.	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1
Finishing Moves	All/Some/None	5	4	3	2	1

2. What is your interactive entertainment system? (circle all that apply)

PC Mac 3DO Sega CD Sega Saturn
Sony PlayStation Philips CD-i Other _____

3. What kind of interactive entertainment do you enjoy?
(circle all that apply)

Games Multimedia CD-ROMs Children's Edutainment
Interactive Music Online Other _____

4. What other computer-entertainment magazines do you read on a regular basis? (circle all that apply)

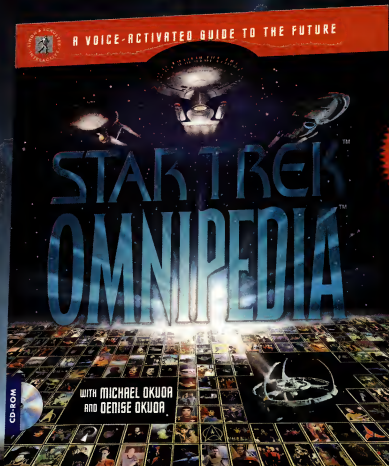
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—**Washington Post**

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SUPREME WARRIOR

Think carefully.

Spotlight

PC MEETS CONSUMER ELECTRONICS

Compact Compaq



data/fax modem, and a 16-bit sound card (wavetable synthesis for better sound is optional). The sound card drives a pair of small but surprisingly listenable built-in speakers with 3-watt amplifiers and Spatializer 3-D sound circuitry. (Unfortunately, there's no hardware volume control.)

Everything looks good because the 5528's local-bus graphics card uses 1MB of fast EDO DRAM (expandable to 2MB). You may have to squint, though, because the high-resolution (1,024-by-768 pixels, 256 colors, 0.28mm dot pitch) 14-inch screen has only a meager 11.9 inches of viewable area.

You can't expand the screen, of course, but the 5528 does offer a pair of full-size ISA expansion slots. That's about it for expansion options—don't even think about more-advanced PCI slots for the next generation of add-in cards. Face it: This machine isn't for power users.

The 5528 does come with a powerful software bundle. You get Windows 95 preinstalled, along with plenty of multimedia and online

options, including a few games (Magic Carpet is the best one).

There's no joystick, though. On the other hand, Compaq's new Gallery interface lets you

choose from four environments from which to access Windows 95 programs: Windows itself, the notebook-like Tabworks, an Activity Manager for beginners, and a themed Launch Pad for kids. A cloyingly commercial multimedia intro helps orient new users.

Apart from its office-beige case, the Compaq Presario 5528 seems more like a piece of consumer electronics than a computer. Even its built-in TrueO MPEG (Motion Pictures Experts Group) chip is designed to support TV-like full-screen, full-motion video—or something close to it, anyway. Just be sure you set the video correctly, because the MPEG functions don't work with 16-bit color settings. And apart from the MPEG titles that come with the Presario, finding MPEG discs may not be easy.

PC purists may not like this machine's focus on consumer electronics, but a lot of regular folks will. (Compaq Computer; 800-888-5858; \$1,999)

—Fredric Paul

Computers are becoming more like consumer-electronics products. With one-piece units like the new **Presario 5528**, companies such as Compaq Computer hope to accelerate that trend by putting the CPU, drives, monitor, microphone, and speakers into a single case. This approach makes a computer more compact and easier to set up, and it helps scale back the spaghetti factory of wires that complicate the back panels of many PCs.

Of course, you pay a premium for one-piece convenience. Single-piece units cost more and limit expansions and upgrades. But if you'd rather spend your time playing *Rebel Assault II* than hacking with your hardware, this Presario may be worth it.

Powered by a far-from-cutting-edge 75MHz Pentium, the \$2,000 5528 includes a quad-speed CD-ROM drive, a 1GB hard drive, 8MB of RAM (expandable to a whopping 72MB), a 19.2/14.4Kbps

Format: PC

Rating: ★ ★ ★ 1/2

PHOTOGRAPH BY WENDELL A. CLARK

Musical Appetizers

The first generation of enhanced CDs is likely to be remembered not as groundbreaking art or technology, but rather as pleasant calling cards for fans of the bands involved. These three recent CD+ releases aren't satisfying enough for dinner, for example, but they make tasty musical snacks.

The Cranberries (who seem to have been reading e.e. cummings lately) pop up with a saucy little disc called **doors and windows**. Five fresh audio tracks (one live, three B-sides, and a neat pastiche of the alternative hit "Zombie" from three different

performances) are augmented by interviews, footages, road videos, footage of the band's Woodstock '94 performance, pictures, and lyrics to the band's first two albums. The interface is decent and the material easy to find—there's just not enough of it if you have a CD-i player with the Digital Video Cartridge, you can see the multimedia in full-screen.

Warning: This is a track 1 disc, so be sure to skip to track 2 in your audio player. (Island Records/Philips Interactive Media; 800-340-7888; \$19.98)

Scanty multimedia also plagues **Kitaro's An Enchanted Evening**, a complete live album from the Japanese New Age artist. The i-trax multimedia (completely safe for your CD player) consists of bios and discographies, a 3-minute video interview, a partial live performance of the percussive "Dance of Sarasvati,"



The Cranberries' Dolores O'Riordan belts it out at Woodstock '94.



View Kitaro's version of modern world music.



An artistic representation of Saga's rock opera, Generation 13.

and—expect to see this on lots of enhanced CDs—a merchandise catalog. With this meager list of material, you may linger longest over the tour jackets. (Domo Records; 800-864-0123; \$15.98)

The most band for the buck comes from Saga, the veteran progressive pop-metal ensemble from Canada. **The Saga Softwareworks** offers most of the audio from the band's recent *Generation 13* (a Pink Floydian rock opera). The i-trax multimedia library adds two live videos, generous sound samples from every song on the band's 12 albums, and art representations of several *Generation 13* songs. Also, anticipating a trend of links to online sites, there's even a copy of the band's World Wide Web site. (Bonaire Records; <http://www.bonaire.com>; \$16.98)

—Donald St. John

The Cranberries' doors and windows

Platform: Win/Mac CD and CD-i

Rating: ★ ★ ★

Kitaro's An Enchanted Evening

Platform: Win/Mac CD

Rating: ★ ★ 1/2

The Saga Softwareworks

Platform: Win/Mac CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★ 1/2

Head of the Class

You've never seen a school quite like **Dr. Tomorrow's Cyberspace University**. This place of learning arrives on a CD-ROM, lives in your Mac or PC, and features a slightly fussy futurist from Canada called—you guessed it—Dr. Tomorrow.

In real life, the good doctor is Frank Ogden, a knowledgeable curmudgeon who does lots of writing, lecturing, and general pontificating on future technologies and society.

Matriculating into this university requires you to first run a game-like gauntlet of corridors where you'll come to understand many of Dr. Tomorrow's opinions on topics from personal initiative to R&D investment in new technologies (he favors both). Once admitted, listen to the Doctor's radio broadcasts, read his musings, peruse the digital art, or watch videos of projects the Doc thinks have foresight—à la Buckminster Fuller, more efficient housing designs of the future pop up several times.

The CD-ROM's environment is playful, yet challeng-

ing. Virtual activity rooms are suspended above water and the help room floats—it's a replica of the good doctor's fully wired houseboat moored off Vancouver Island. Navigation is simple, especially with the Doctor's unique brand of smart-aleck humor egging you on.

Don't be misled by the clichés on the box, which warn you "not to be roadkill on the information highway." Although Dr. Tomorrow doesn't ignore the online world, the Net is not the emphasis of this delightful and thought-provoking title; understanding what technology has in store for us is. (Brentwood Interactive; 800-782-8892; <http://www.nas.com/>; brentwood; \$29.95)

—Donald St. John



Dr. Tomorrow tells it like it will be.

Platform: Win/Mac CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

Spotlight

WAR AND REMEMBRANCE

Wall of Anguish

It's just a simple wall of black granite. But to an entire generation of Americans, The Vietnam War

Memorial calls forth an incredibly powerful mix of conflicting emotions: grief, sadness, bitterness, relief, anger, and even an odd nostalgia. Some 2.5 million people visit the Wall each year.

Beyond The Wall, a new CD-ROM produced by Magnet Interactive Studios in nearby Georgetown, documents the monument and briefly outlines the war. Narrated by Adrian Cronauer (the Armed Forces Radio DJ portrayed by Robin Williams in the film *Good Morning, Vietnam*), the title weaves together a wide variety of multimedia materials, including historical video and audio clips, letters, photos, documents, newspaper articles, songs, memorabilia, personal histories,

3-D animations, and a searchable database of all the 58,196 casualties whose names are inscribed on the Wall.

You'll hear comments from Wall designer Maya Lin and glimpse

Access to the wall is available via a bird's-eye view.



Beyond The Wall attempts to recreate a mix of the honor and the horror of war.

some of the other 1,420 entries in the competition for the memorial's design. There's even a section on the controversial new Vietnam Women's Memorial erected near the Wall, which

includes stories and memories of women who served "in country."

The various elements work together to bring home the overwhelming sense of loss that surrounds the Vietnam War and its monument. But by remaining resolutely apolitical and skirting the intense controversies over the war and the Wall, the disc underplays the raw anger that still rages in many people. The sober, measured approach and high production values lend a museum quality to the disc, seeming to close a chapter of history that's still very much open for millions of Americans. (20th Century Fox Home Entertainment; 800-996-0017; \$49.98)

—Fredric Paul

Platform: Win CD, Mac CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★ 1/2



Almost 1,500 designs were reviewed before Maya Lin's Wall was chosen.

E=MPC

Multimedia biographies remain an infant art form. Last year's *The Ultimate Frank Lloyd Wright*—developed by Byron Preiss Multimedia for Microsoft—helped define the genre (January 1995, page 31). **The Ultimate Einstein** is Byron Preiss's latest effort to profile a famous figure on CD-ROM.

On the plus side, Einstein makes a much warmer and more approachable subject than the largely despised Wright. But Wright's visual genius made for an artistically gorgeous multimedia title. The Einstein disc's designers have done a nice job making Albert attractive, but it's tough to stroll through an equation.

Instead, you get the complete text of

Ronald W. Clark's best-selling book *Einstein: The Life and Times*, a fascinating interactive time line, question-and-answer readings by an uninspiring actor, and an odd set of "experiments" that demonstrate the twins paradox, black holes, and the effects of accelerating to the speed of light.

Perhaps the most satisfying bit on the disc is a 1940 radio interview with Einstein recorded on the day he received his American citizenship. It reveals a remarkably warm and thoughtful human being. (Simon & Schuster Interactive;



That's an actor, not Albert.

800-983-5333; \$49.95) —Fredric Paul

Platform: Win CD, Mac CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★ 1/2



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THE ADDICTION BEGINS IN NOVEMBER ON PC AND MAC

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Spotlight

A PARADE OF TRIVIA

A Record-Breaking Disc

What is the most powerful car in the world? Who holds the record for the most touchdown passes? Who had the longest fingernails in recorded history?

For the answers to these and thousands of other arcane questions, check out Grolier's **1995 Guinness Disc of Records**, the update to the 1994 disc. The new version features approximately 15,000 entries, more than 1,000 photos, and a bevy of animation, sound, and video clips—from the mundane to the truly unusual. The Random Record Explorer lets you access entries alphabetically, by date, or randomly in slide-show fashion.

Of particular delight is the new Monty Python-esque opening movie sequence, while the new Guess What? trivia game tests your knowledge of the biggest, best, most, longest, and other superlative record-breakers.



The biggest, the smallest, the longest, the shortest—Guinness has it all.

Sadly missing this year, though, is the paperback version of the book that was packed with the 1994 electronic edition. Even without the book, though, the 1995 Guinness Disc of Records is a must for any trivia buff. (Grolier Electronic Publishing; 800-285-4534; \$49.95)

—John Sauer

Platform: Win CD, Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Warning: Comic In the Kitchen

Cooking with Dom DeLuise is the next best thing to having the famous comedian/gastronome crowding you in your own kitchen. The two-disc set, peppered with DeLuise's infectious sense of humor, offers recipes for plenty of healthy and delicious dishes. One disc addresses meats, fish, poultry, and pasta; the other covers vegetables, salads, desserts, and breads.

The energetic and enthusiastic DeLuise helps you create shopping lists, organize your recipes, and make cooking easier. He suggests tools to track cooking time, double or triple your recipes, and convert measurements. There is more than an hour of video and audio clips—many with DeLuise laugh-



Good food is no laughing matter.

ing uproariously at his own computer jokes. The recipes are amazingly easy to fix and are light on saturated fats.

Although the disc contains many great recipes, it is DeLuise that makes it worthwhile. He is both dedicated and dismissive, theatrical and practical. And don't be surprised when he lets out a spirited burp. The man knows how to have fun. For an interview with the chef, see Sharp Edge, page 14. (Allegro New Media; 800-424-1992; \$49.95)

—Joy J. Ma

Platform: Win CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Microsoft Launches A SideWinder

Microsoft has targeted the joystick market with a SideWinder, and game controllers may never be the same.

Unlike most joysticks, the **SideWinder 3-D Pro** tracks stick movement without potentiometers (variable-resistance dials similar to those on a standard volume control). Potentiometers can get dirty, wear out, and react to temperature changes. Instead, the SideWinder 3-D Pro uses more reliable light-emitting diodes (LEDs) and tracking cameras.

The technological innovations don't end there. This digital stick complies with Microsoft's digital "direct input" standard for Windows 95 controllers, helping it respond faster and use fewer CPU resources than its analog counterparts—while still connecting to a standard joystick port.

This well-made controller has all the standard bells and whistles, too. In addition to the eight fire buttons and throttle, the SideWinder 3-D Pro also sports a three-way hat switch. The buttons click crisply and feel like they'll take plenty of abuse. The stick itself also lets you twist the grip to control rotation. For example, in MechWarrior 2, the rotation control operates "turret twist," letting you play without having to reach for the keyboard as often. The stick itself moves smoothly, although it may not provide stiff enough resistance for some die-hard flight-simmers and may actually be too responsive in digital mode.

Don't have Windows 95 yet? Don't worry, the SideWinder 3-D Pro emulates analog joysticks, including CH Products' Flightstick Pro and the ThrustMaster Flight Control System. Best of all, this cutting-edge controller will cost you less than \$60. Check it out. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; \$59.95, \$79.95 with MechWarrior 2) —Christopher Lindquist

Platform: PC **Rating:** ★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

The SideWinder 3-D Pro sizzles.



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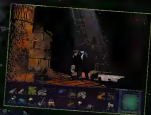
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Spotlight

WAY TO GO

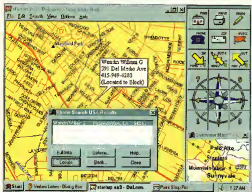
Street Smart

Real men don't ask directions, right? Well, now you won't have to, no matter where you're headed. Three new street-map titles put every map for every U.S. city just a click away.

DeLorme Mapping's **Street Atlas USA 3.0**, Microsoft's **Automap Streets 4.0** and Compton's **Complete Street Guide** all basically do the same thing: Help you pinpoint your destination, customize the relevant maps (to plan your route, for example), and then print them out to take with you.

But **Street Atlas USA** has the clearest maps and the most flexible approach to searching out your destination. All three let you search by city, street, and zip code, but only **Street Atlas** and the **Street Guide** let you find an exact address. And **Street Atlas** alone lets you search by phone number or area code. It even has a nifty feature that lets you type in a partial address or city, then tells you the zip code or area code.

You can also use **Street Atlas** with DeLorme's **Phone Search USA**, a three-disc database of phone numbers (\$79). Need to locate someone, but know only their name and city?



Search by name, phone number, or location in DeLorme's **Street Atlas USA**.

but it lacks maps for Alaska (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; \$69.95).

Finally, the budget-priced Compton's brings up the rear because it can't automatically pinpoint a specific street address. (Compton's NewMedia; 800-261-6109; \$29.95)

—Christine Grech

DeLorme Street Atlas USA 3.0

Platform: WinWin 95 CD Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Microsoft Automap Streets 4.0

Platform: Win CD Rating: ★ ★ ★

Compton's Complete Street Guide

Platform: Win CD Rating: ★ ★ 1/2

Type it into **Street Atlas**, then pop in one of the three **Phone Search USA** discs for a list of possible names and addresses. Click on one name to find it in **Street Atlas**. **Street Atlas** costs a bit more, but it's worth it. (DeLorme Mapping; 800-452-5931; street price \$79)

The two-disc **Automap** set is our second choice,

Mountain Highs

Resting a monster mountain peak may be the fantasy of many a weekend warrior, but most don't understand the real ups and downs of serious climbing. Media Mosaic's **Rock Climbing** (based on *Mountaineering: The Freedom Of The Hills* from the Seattle Mountaineers group) and Peak Media's **Mount Everest, Quest for the Summit of Dreams: Volume 1, The North Side** give flatlanders a look at the blood and guts of tackling the biggest bumps.

Like Media Mosaic's **Mountain Biking** CD-ROM, **Rock Climbing** uses an earthy yet sophisticated interface featuring narrated animated lessons and video clips highlighting the techniques and excitement of this exhilarating but treacherous sport. The Learning Curve section covers fundamental moves, concepts, and gear. The Virtual Mountain lets you practice

various techniques on a variety of terrain.

Media Mosaic's title is an elegant and easy-to-use resource for climbing novices and enthusiasts. While it delivers a lot of specific information effectively, it falls short in connecting the information together. (Media Mosaic; 800-972-3766; \$49.95)

If you'd rather watch pros, **Mount Everest, Quest For The Summit of Dreams: Volume 1, The North Side** covers the drama of eight international expeditions that crested Mount Everest with diagrams, photos, and animations. The timelines of each team's struggle to the top are brought to life with photos, videos, and dramatic radio transmissions. Don't miss this enlightening and entertaining trip up the world's highest mountain. (Peak Media; 800-453-5322; \$59.95) —Bill Meyer



Narrated videos illustrate specific climbing techniques in **Rock Climbing**.



Experience multiple expeditions up the Mother Goddess in **Mount Everest, Quest for the Summit of Dreams**.

Rock Climbing

Platform: Win CD Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

Mount Everest

Platform: Win CD Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

"This ain't no flight sim...this rocks."

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"This game is best described as a hybrid of *Magic Carpet* and *Descent* — a combination that will delight the vast majority of PC gamers." —Next Generation

"Terminal Velocity is as good a shooter as you can find at the arcade. It is the next generation of games..." —Computer Game Review

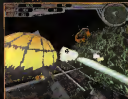
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Spotlight

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Why torture your friends with tedious home videos? Edit them into short, snappy scenes with Gold Disk's **VideoDirector Home**.

Use VideoDirector's Smart Cable to connect your camcorder and VCR to your PC's serial port. Then use the infrared remote to run the VCR and camcorder (or



VideoDirector Home's on-screen camcorder and VCR images turn anyone into Steven Spielberg.

use the cable's more-accurate Sony-standard LANC connector, supported by most newer camcorders).

As the camcorder plays your raw footage, you view the video on your TV, using VideoDirector to mark the beginning and ending points of the choice clips and to name each one. Then you arrange the scenes by dragging their titles around in VideoDirector's Script window. Click "Make Tape" and VideoDirector goes to work, telling your camcorder to shuttle the tape back and forth while your VCR does the re-recording. Voilà! You have an edited video masterpiece.

With a street price of only \$50, everyone with a home computer and a camcorder should try out VideoDirector Home. (Gold Disk; 800-982-9888; street price \$49)

—Paul Worthington

Platform: Windows

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Sickening Screen Savers

Take a walk on the weird side—if you dare—with a pair of sophomoric, wacky new screen savers.

You'll be sure to gross out anyone near your computer with the **Slugs of Oregon** screen saver from PSG-HomeCraft. You get a truly disgusting collection of 15 still (or reallllllly sloooow-moving) images, including banana slugs in Rice Krispies, slugs and eggs, and even a slug crawling across a toothbrush (gulp).

Slugs of Oregon will also stream custom or pre-fab messages across the screen. And it even lets visitors type in messages to you while you're away from your computer—that is, if they're willing to touch your keyboard. (PSG HomeCraft Software; 800-207-7735; \$39.95)

If slugs are not your style, Berkeley Systems (of flying-toaster fame) has sunk to a new low. **The Totally Twisted**



Flush your screen for safety.

After Dark Screen Saver, first reviewed in Sharp Edge back in April (page 10), offers 13 fully animated and truly disgusting modules. In addition to flying toilets, you can go on a Mime Hunt, take a dip in the Toxic Swamp, or bask nausea watching a bunch of strange creatures "shout groceries" and then happily lap it up. Of course, adding kittens to the lawnmower module in previous After Dark packages takes the gross-out prize. You've been warned. (Berkeley Systems; 800-344-5541; about \$30)—Suzanne Frear

Slugs of Oregon
Platform: Win, Win 95
Rating: ★ ★ 1/2

Totally Twisted
Platform: Win/Win 95, Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★

Modern Mac Modeming

The most noticeable thing about Global Village's new **TelePort Platinum 28.8Kbps Fax/Modem** for the Macintosh is that it works so well that you hardly notice it's there. I plugged the Walkman-sized unit into my Centris 610's serial port, loaded the software, and it was up and running.

This little dynamo faxes at 14.4Kbps and sends and receives data at 28.8Kbps (the fastest fax standard available) for snapper chatting and downloads on the Internet, bulletin boards, and commercial online services. And if you go in for online gaming, having a fast modem can't hurt.

At \$240, it's about \$40 more expensive than most 28.8Kbps PC modems available, but you get a built-in Mac connector (a \$10 value), easy-to-use GlobalFax software and optical character recognition (OCR) software to convert received faxes into editable text. On a Power Mac, GlobalFax has built-in accelerators to take full advantage of their extra processing oomph. And the Platinum automatically distinguishes between live callers and incoming data. (Global Village; 800-736-4821; \$239) —Ann M. Marcus



Faster modeming costs a little bit more.

Platform: Mac

Rating: ★ ★ ★

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Spotlight

KNOW THE SCORE

Not Quite a Classic

Classical music doesn't change much. No one really wants it to. But Intersound is changing the way classical music is delivered. The first in a set of upcoming enhanced classical CD releases, **A Musical Odyssey**, lets you learn about the Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and Modern periods while you listen to the music of those times.

The disc's Coming To Terms section has loads of biographical info on the musicians themselves—Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Chopin, Ravel and others—information on various musical styles and instruments, and a look at the historical context in which each artist composed his work. Keeping Score lets you follow the music as it plays, note by note, either on-



The Keeping Score section lets you follow the bouncing baton.

...and Maurice Ravel, who experimented with jazz and dance rhythms.



Learn about the lives and times of the musicians who wrote the classics.

screen or with a printout. This feature one-ups the Laserlight series of classical CD-ROMs (see September 1995, page 30), which features scoring but lacks the follow-along capability.

Each disc uses 4MB of hard-disk space, a problem you won't have with the lean Laserlight discs. And with all that space, Intersound's enhancements don't add much zip, making the experience scarcely more engaging than an elementary-school music class. (Intersound; 800-945-3059; \$1298)—*Donald St. John*

Platform: Win/Mac CD **Rating:** ★ ★ 1/2

Brrrr!

It drives my wife crazy, but the weather report is my favorite part of the news. I immediately flip to that big color map on the back page of *USA Today*. And when I flip on The Weather Channel, I'm transfixed for hours.

Now, even my computer isn't safe. Everything Weather—created by The Weather Channel for the Bureau of Electronic Publishing—mixes meteorological minutia with 250 weather-disaster photos and 40 video clips. The accessible interface offers national and global weather data, interactive weather maps, a

weather-oriented planner with daily facts and monthly photos, a search feature, a 480-word glossary, even a cloud-type guessing game.

The photos and videos on tornadoes, hurricanes, storms, and blizzards are cool. You also get instructive animations, interactive hurricane trackers, tornado view-

Like a hurricane.

ers, and lightning timers. For weather updates, use your modem to dial up forecasts for 200 U.S. cities (at 75 cents a pop).

More humor and enthusiasm might have been nice. As for my wife, she'd rather watch paint dry. (Bureau of Electronic Publishing; 201-808-2700; street price, \$55) —*Fredric Paul*

Platform: Win CD (Mac CD due first quarter of 1996)

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Golden Dome Glory

It may not have been the best of seasons for the Fighting Irish (a loss to *Northwestern*?), but you can relive the team's past glories with **Notre Dame Football**.

The Notre Dame disc is part of a pricey series of college-skins multimedia products from Stella Interactive and ABC sports. The disc begins with an introduction by Keith Jackson, ABC's dean of college football TV broadcasters. On the field, you'll bump into shortish video clips from notable seasons. Pop into the Coach's Office for a history of Notre Dame coaches, including stirring videos of the legendary Knute Rockne. A nifty search engine in the Locker Room lets you locate all ND players who ever lettered in football.

But it wouldn't be complete without The Fan Club video of the marching band and the pep rallies. There's even a tough Fighting Irish football trivia game. The background audio is often nonexistent, but the five fight songs on the Fan Club's jukebox were stirring. (Stella Interactive; 800-619-4691; street price \$45) —*Donald St. John*

Platform:

Win/Mac CD

Rating:

★ ★ ★ 1/2



The Rocket—Rahgib Ismail—in his Heisman days at Notre Dame.

don't play mind games

Go head-to-head instead



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Spotlight

NO SUBSTITUTE FOR MOTHER NATURE

Natural High

Dying to get back to nature but can't tear yourself away from your computer? Indulge yourself in Chestnut NewMedia's **Tour of USA National Parks**. Although it's short on eye-pleasing visuals, this inexpensive Windows CD-ROM is jam-packed with the information you need to plan a real-world trip to the great outdoors.

Take an armchair tour of each park or skip to the terrific summary view, which compiles information on park locations, history, recreational activities, and reservation phone numbers. The disc includes the well-



Will the Beatles be so fortunate?

known national parks like Yosemite and Mount Rainier, but it's even more useful if you're contemplating an expedition to such lesser-known

sights as Gates of the Arctic or Rainbow Bridge.

Unfortunately, the visuals are mostly mediocre and supplemented with only minimal audio or video clips. No substitute for the real thing, but at least you get ideas for your vacation. (Chestnut NewMedia; 800-494-2268; \$9.99)

If it's specifically the Grand Canyon you're interested in, check out The Coriols Group's **Explore the Grand Canyon**. Of course, the majesty of the Grand Canyon loses a bit of its impact on a 14-inch computer screen, but Coriols has made a valiant attempt at letting you enjoy a visit to the Big Ditch from the comfort of your own home, at your own pace.

Developed by Phoenix's Media Terra, the disc ties together more than 3,000 photos and a couple of hours of professional narration with an uninspiring soundtrack and a bizarre time-lapse-video rafting trip down the Colorado River. There are interesting topographical maps, as well as a three-dimensional Virtual Landscape you can traverse. The perspective changes slowly and choppy, however (especially on a slower computer). Explore the many side canyons for fasci-



Explore the Grand Canyon with photos, maps, and a 3-D fly-through in Coriols's fascinating title.

nating photos, explanatory text, or video hot spots. Because the title requires Super VGA video resolution with 32,000 or more colors, a Pentium and 16MB of RAM are recommended. If you have Internet access, the built-in NetSeeker application lets you download new information and software.

The title makes the mile-deep hole in the ground seem like an interesting place to visit, but does little to communicate its awesome grandeur. (The Coriols Group; 800-410-0192; \$49.99) —*Sue Kim and Fredric Paul*

National Parks

Platform: Win CD

Rating: ★ ★ 1/2

Grand Canyon

Platform: Win CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★

Water Worlds

What has one foot, no head, and rarely comes unhinged? To find out, check out **Microsoft Oceans** and plunge into the fascinating world of the deep.

Excellent for reference, research, or just entertainment, **Oceans** immerses you in nearly 1,000 photographs, 100 videos, and 1,000 sound clips, plus plenty of text about all things marine; sponges, scorpion fish, and sea cucumbers; the environmental impact of man, famous pirates, buried treasure, and more.

The easy-to-navigate interface divides this enormous topic into Marine Life, A World of Water, and People and the Sea. **Microsoft Oceans** features an extensive search function, as well as a selection of games to test your newfound knowledge.

If you find undersea life absorbing, you can't go wrong with this reference addition for your family. Oh, by the way, the answer is a clam. (Microsoft Home; 800-426-9400; \$34.95)

—*Joy J. Ma*

Microsoft Oceans

Platform: Win CD

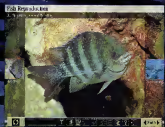
Rating: ★ ★ ★ 1/2

For a slightly different perspective on the underwater experience, dive into Jean-Michel Cousteau's **World Volume 1 Cities Under the Sea: Coral Reefs**. This Interactive disc lets you explore seven international coral reef communities from different underwater laboratories.

With more than 35 minutes of video, almost an hour-long narrated slide show, and more than 700 photographs, this Windows CD-ROM is somewhat less broad in its approach than **Microsoft Oceans**, but delves deeply into such topics as evolution, reproduction, and biodiversity.

You move among the seven underwater environments, using a virtual submarine. Watch as different animals interact with one another.

Find out how a coral atoll—formed over many millennia—is the perfect habitat for pufferfish, brittle stars, giant clams, and sea anemone. (Interactive; 800-452-9999; \$49.95) —*Suzanna Frear*



Learn how fish do it.

Cities Under the Sea

Platform: Win/Vin 95 CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★



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Dimension 3

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potions.



Heart-pounding gameplay with
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Explore tunnels, crypts, lava pits and
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maps with endless puzzles and plots.

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Spotlight

SOUND SAMPLING

From Soul to Psychedelia

Some people say the '60s are back, but when you live in San Francisco, it's like they never left. And that's how it feels when you pop in **Rock Expedition: The 1960s** and **Soul Expedition: The 1960s**, a pair of new enhanced CDs that chronicle the music of that tumultuous era.

Held up for almost a year by technical and legal issues (we first previewed them in Sharp Edge, October 1994, page 10), the titles are a strange amalgam of business, art, and technology. Developed by San Francisco-based Jouissance Productions and finally released by Compton's NewMedia, the projects relied on material from Rhino Records, and they clearly demonstrate the potential for success and failure in musical multimedia.

Oddly, each title ships with a pair of discs. The first is a hybrid disc that plays in your CD player, your Mac, and most Windows machines. In case your CD-ROM drive won't work with the mixed-mode i-trax-encoded CD, the second disc contains an alternate copy of the Windows

version, but without the audio tracks for your stereo.

Both discs give you full audio versions of 10 or 11 period classics. The rock songs range



The great Otis Redding died at 26, but lives on via CD-ROM.

from Sonny and Cher's syrupy "I Got You (Babe)" to the bombastic "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida" from Iron Butterfly. On the soul side, tunes range from Wilson Pickett's "In The Midnight Hour" to Otis Redding's classic "Sittin' On The Dock Of The Bay."

When you play the discs on your computer, you'll also get clever graphics; videos, song backgrounds, interviews, biographies, and discographies of a number of artists;



Iron Butterfly slips multimedia nectar in the Garden of Eden.

and fascinating trivia (did you know that the Turtles played the White House at Tricia Nixon's wedding party?). Unfortunately, the discussions aren't very deep, and the music stops when you check out the multimedia.

Ultimately, the Soul disc outshines its Rock counterpart, primarily because of song selection: The Rock disc contains mostly lightweight pop hits, while the Soul performances seem timeless and still powerful. (Compton's NewMedia; 800-284-2045; \$29.95 each) —Fredric Paul

Rock Expedition:

The 1960s

Platform: Audio/Win/Mac CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★ 1/2

Soul Expedition:

The 1960s

Platform: Audio/Win/Mac CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

A Solution In Search of a Problem

Recoton's **WC 430** wireless computer speakers sound like a good idea—the freedom to place your speakers anywhere you want.

You simply attach the flying-saucer-shaped 900MHz radio transmitter to your sound card, plug in the two 20-watt speakers, and then twiddle a few knobs on the front of each speaker to adjust the reception. If there's no electrical outlet nearby, they'll even run on batteries.

Unfortunately, no matter how you adjust them, the speakers often seem to suffer a bit of static and buzzing. More importantly, wireless speakers don't

make much sense for multimedia use. Computer speakers generally go on both



No tripping over wires here.

sides of the monitor—wires simply aren't a problem.

Unless you really need to separate your speakers from your computer and can afford the \$250 price tag, you're better off sticking to standard speakers. But Recoton also makes a set of decent wireless headphones (often bundled with the speakers) that could come in handy for gamers with a light-sleeping spouse or sensitive neighbors. (Recoton; 800-742-3438; \$249.95) —Fredric Paul

Platform: PC/Mac

Rating: ★ ★

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and friends



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The next generation in 3D gaming!

Spotlight

FUNNY ONCE

Digital Rim Shot

Way back in January (Sharp Edge, page 10), we previewed **Comedians**, the interactive comedy club from Magnet Interactive. Now that it's finally available (via Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment), we can't help but heckle.

Yes, the title's 3-D interface is lovely: It's done up like the interior of an upscale club in Anytown, U.S.A. And **Comedians** features the work of a baker's dozen of comedy's modern-day greats: Billy Crystal, Whoopi Goldberg, Bob Hope, Alan King, Sam Kinison, Robert Klein, Richard Lewis, Steve Martin, Jackie Mason, Joan Rivers, Lily Tomlin, Robin Williams, and Steven Wright. But navigating to the various hot spots is excruciatingly slow—and with comedy, timing is everything.

Don't get me wrong, Arthur Grace's acclaimed black-and-white photos are breathtaking. There are lots of cute gadgets—from the Mickey Mouse glove-like cursor (which wags a finger at you when you try to revisit certain hot spots) to the condom machine/video viewer in the club's bathroom.

I found something a lot more dangerous than cocaine.
Nintendo.
—Robin Williams



And the clips—launched from all over the club—are entertaining. A few are downright hilarious—the first time you see them. OK, maybe even the second time. But as you wander from room to rendered room, you encounter the same clips over and over and over. After a while, you start to hate these people. And even with the repetition, I got through all 13 comedians' full repertoires in just a couple of hours. Do yourself a favor and spend the time and money at a real comedy club. (Magnet Interactive; 800-625-7171; \$44.98)

—Ann M. Marcus

Platform: Win CD, Mac CD

Rating: ★ ★ 1/2

Ramping Up

Haven't figured out this Internet thing? Not to worry. A million companies want to help you—by selling you software or where you where to go once you're online.

A comprehensive solution on both fronts comes from Ventana's **World Wide Web Kit**. You get a CD-ROM that includes Netscape Navigator, several ways to connect to Net providers, and two books, *Netscape Quick Tour for Windows* and *Walking the World Wide Web*, both of which offer tips galore on getting around the Net with Netscape. The only drawback is that it may intimidate beginners by providing too much information. (Psst: Order from Ventana's Web site at <http://www.vmedia.com>, and clip 15 percent off the pricey \$49.95 charge.) (Ventana Communications; 800-743-5369; \$49.95)

Just as instructive, but lighter on software, is **The Internet: A Knowledge Odyssey** from MindQ Publishing. Patient, beautifully designed tutorials (supplemented with video clips of Internet cofounder Vinton Cerf) explain the whats, hows, and wheres of the Net. You get easy-to-install access software and straightforward hyperlinks to Web sites—a good package for enthusiastic beginners. (MindQ Publishing; 800-646-3008; \$49.95)

GT Interactive's **Internet the Easy Way** doesn't have the design sense of *A Knowledge Odyssey*, but this true tutorial goes step-by-step and even lets you save your place. Perfect for technophobes. Included is a trial account with Pipeline, a popular national Net provider. (GT Interactive;



The Internet: A Knowledge Odyssey is a beginner's dream.

800-434-2637; \$29.95)

If you already have some idea of how to navigate the Net, but don't feel like hunting down the software you need, consider Microforum's **Internet Edge**, which bundles popular Internet tools and even a "lite" version of the Internet Yellow Pages. And in an odd but nice touch, you get electronic renditions of classic books such as *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Anna Karenina*. (Microforum; 416-656-6406; \$19.95)

—Donald St. John

World Wide Web Kit

Platform: Win CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

The Internet: A Knowledge Odyssey

Platform: Win CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

Internet the Easy Way

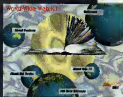
Platform: Win CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★

Internet Edge

Platform: Win /Mac CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★



The World Wide Web Kit's bright design leads to a world of Netscape-enhanced resources.

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— Denny Atkin
Computer Gaming World

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PHILIPS

Spotlight

NO BORING BEIGE

Great Aspirations

Acer is out to blend modern technology with modern design. We previewed the sleek, colorful **Aspire** models last month (see Sharp Edge, November, page 13).

But when our charcoal-colored Aspire minitower arrived (it comes in a dusty teal they call "emerald," too), we uncovered some ugly truths behind the unit's pretty face.

A rattle coming from inside the unit prompted us to remove the cover. We were disappointed with the flimsy feel of the machine's front-panel hinges, and the cover-release handle emitted a brittle crack when pulled. Once inside, we found the source of the rattle: A plastic clip used to hold full-length expansion cards in place had itself become detached from the chassis. We snapped it back, then attempted to replace the cover—it took a finger-pinching 25 minutes with precious little help from the manual. We couldn't give up, though, because with the case ajar, the CD-ROM drive button wouldn't push in far enough to activate the drive. In its defense, Acer plans to update the manual to cover the tricky sleight-of-hand method for closing the case, and the company is investigating a heavier-gauge plastic for the Aspire minitower's case.

Cosmetic flaws aside, the system performed well in our gaming and multimedia tests. The unit we evaluated is a fast Pentium 100 with a hefty 16MB of RAM (8MB is standard), a roomy 1GB hard drive, a fast 28.8Kbps modem, and a snappy quad-speed CD-ROM drive. The matching 15-inch monitor features built-in speakers, a



Acer's minitower has lots of style, but questionable substance.

microphone, and front-panel controls for volume and picture adjustment. The keyboard even features a removable wrist rest (in a dashing purple).

The software bundle includes Windows 95 as well as nearly 50 other titles, which lean toward games and reference packages for the younger set: Viacom NewMedia's *Are You Afraid of the Dark?*; Epic Megagames' *Epic Pinball*, the shareware version of Interplay's *Descent*.

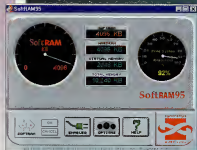
Our test unit retails for about \$2,300, including monitor, but Aspire systems are available in configurations from a \$1,300 486DX/100 to a \$2,800 Pentium 133 (not including monitors). All are covered by a three-year warranty (including a year of on-site service). As noted in our "Holiday Gift Guide" (page 81), the desktop version of the Aspire does not suffer from the minitower's material weaknesses. (Acer America; 800-368-2237; \$2,300)

—Ann M. Marcus

Platform: PC

Rating: ★ ★ 1/2

More RAM, Less Effort



Boost your computer's memory without adding more hardware.

Sick of closing a bunch of applications in Windows just to be able to load up another application? Want to play titles that require more RAM than you have, but can't afford to add more hardware memory? SoftRAM⁹⁵ may have an answer.

SoftRAM⁹⁵ is a software-based "RAM doubler" that compresses your system's hardware memory, making space for more and larger applications. The best part is that SoftRAM⁹⁵ costs less than \$100, whereas an 8MB SDRAM will run you \$300 or more.

Too good to be true? Possibly. For starters, SoftRAM⁹⁵ works only with Windows, so your DOS games won't

benefit a bit. And if you turn up the compression to the max, you'll get more memory but your system may slow to a crawl.

That means SoftRAM⁹⁵ may be an appropriate interim fix for people who only occasionally need extra memory, or for gamers stuck with 4MB of RAM and not enough dough to upgrade. But if you're looking for the best performance, you still need to pony up the extra cash for the hard stuff. (Synchrony; 800-691-7981; \$99)

—Christopher Lindquist

Platform: Windows, Windows 95

Rating: ★ ★ ★



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HARDWARE FOR LITTLE HANDS

Kiddie Keyboards And Mini Mice



The Comfy Activity Center and VTech SoundLearning Keyboard are just for kids.



Sega's Pico is more than a junior video-game machine.

For kids, the holidays mean presents, family, and fun—but for parents it means often staying up all night assembling toy trains, bikes, and doll houses. Well, times have changed—your kids probably e-mailed their wish lists this year—so you may want to consider a special high-tech computer toy. These keyboards, mice, and set-top systems are designed especially for little hands and developing minds.

For toddlers, there's the **Comfy Activity Center**. This keyboard plugs into your computer's printer port and features color and music keys, a telephone, and a roller. The device works only with software specially designed for it. Little ones press on the buttons to develop recognition skills, such as colors, shapes, animals, and musical instruments. Although there is plenty to do, the animation is sparse and flat.

The Activity Center comes bundled with two programs. We couldn't get the DOS-only titles to work with Windows 95, but the company says the Windows 95 versions will be available by the New Year. (Comfy Interactive; 800-992-6639; \$99; software, \$19-29 each)

Like the Comfy Activity Center, VTech's **SoundLearning Keyboard** also plugs into the parallel port, but it has a built-in 8-bit sound card and speakers. Dubbed a "talking keyboard," the device has special picture buttons, as well as alphabet keys. For ages 3 to 6, the Keyboard comes with one floppy-based software title, which lets kids wander around different environments where they practice various skills. As with the Comfy, the graphics aren't very sophisticated.

Unfortunately, we had difficulty getting the Keyboard running, spending hours on the phone to tech support and trying the device on three different computers. It finally worked on an antiquated 486 without Windows 95. (VTech;

800-477-6278; \$79.99; additional software, \$19.99 each)

On a smaller scale, Microsoft's **EasyBall** plugs into your PC's serial port. About the size of a Nerf ball, this mouse substitute comes with software that lets kids pick a fun cursor. EasyBall is sold separately for \$14.95 or bundled with Microsoft Explorapedia: The World of Nature for \$54.95. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400)

Alternately, check out Sima's line of **PC Pals**. Scaled down to fit a child's hand, this line includes an EasyRoller trackball (\$34.95) and an EasyGrip handheld mouse (\$22.95), both in bright yellow. (Sima; 800-345-7462)

And if you don't want the kids using your computer, consider getting them one of their own. Sega's **Pico** for ages 3 to 7 turns your TV set into a high-tech activity center. A story unfolds on the TV screen with each turn of the Storyware page. One title comes bundled with Pico, while other Storyware titles are available for 40 each. (Sega; 415-802-3659; street price, \$140)

Finally, remember that some things never change. Like their low-tech forebears, these computer toys should be labeled: "Some assembly—and troubleshooting—required."

—Suzanne Frear

Microsoft's EasyBall starts 'em up early.



Sima's EasyRoller trackball makes your PC their Pal.



Comfy Activity Center

Platform: DOS

Rating: ★ ★ ★

VTech SoundLearning Keyboard

Platform: DOS

Rating: ★ ★ 1/2

Sima's PC Pals

Platform: PC

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Microsoft's EasyBall

Platform: Windows, Windows 95

Rating: ★ ★ ★ 1/2

Sega's Pico

Platform: Color TV

Rating: ★ ★ 1/2

Kids and parents alike will appreciate Sima's EasyGrip mouse.



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TASTY DISH

Funky Town

Chop Suey, a deliciously hip interactive storybook from Magnet Interactive, is determined to stretch the imagination of its audience—girls ages 7 and up.

Here's the set-up: After a magical lunch at the Ping Ping Palace chop suey shop, Lily and June Bugg find their home of Cortland, Ohio, a very different place. A wonderfully fractured day-dream weaves together various threads of their lives—with scenes of their Aunt Vera and friend Ned, beat poetry, guitar improvis, and toothy flowers.

Through the eyes of the Buggs, kids tour downtown Cortland—a whimsical map is chock-full of goofy places. As they explore the town, kids happen upon such unusual sights as a witch boiling a hapless boy in her cauldron. Other outlandish yet curiously human characters include Dooner, the Bugg sisters' jammin' cousin; Mudpup the dog; and Madame Mystery.



This is no ordinary firefly.



Anyone for pickles?

The lyrical, almost stream-of-consciousness story is narrated by writer David Sedaris, a National Public Radio regular. Original music pipes up from the most unusual sources, such as the picnic table full of warbling pickles and crooning cupcakes. The unique illustrations are vibrant and stylish. And did I mention Chop Suey's games, which will have kids returning again and again?

Chop Suey was created specifically for young girls—but the disc's intelligent story and unique delivery give it a broader appeal. (Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment; 800-996-0011; \$34.98)

—Joy J. Ma

Platform: Mac CD, Win CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

Beethoven's Upstairs

Beethoven wouldn't exactly roll over in his grave after taking a look at **Beethoven Lives Upstairs**, developed by Music Pen for BMG Interactive Entertainment, but he wouldn't tell Tchaikovsky the news, either.

Based upon the audio and video collection of the same name—in which a boy briefly shares his home with Beethoven as the great composer writes the famous 5th Symphony—the CD-ROM for ages 6 to 12 offers animated lessons and fast-paced thinking games that teach a bit about classical music. Kids click on objects in the program's five scenes to call up a game, activity, or animation. They can also view a bit of grainy footage from the original video associated with each scene or engage in a token painting activity.

Each game in **Beethoven Lives Upstairs** covers one musical concept, such as rhythm, notation, instrumentation, and stylistic approach. The games teach the old-fashioned way—hard-core repetition. In one game, kids must collect whole notes as they



Classical education entertains parents and gamers.

fall like water drops from the ceiling and crash to the floor in increments—whole, quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes. If players don't catch the specified amount of notes, the ceiling collapses and they lose. Kids have to think and act quickly, which really drills home the concepts.

Unfortunately, the mechanics of the games, rather than the content, make them overly difficult and frustrating. This is especially true of

a Tetris-like game in which kids try to group instruments from one family together in a row. Even if your child can identify the instruments, pieces fall too randomly and quickly to place them correctly. Other activities, such as learning about instrument sounds, often fail to offer encouragement or reward success.

Beethoven Lives Upstairs is a well-conceived title that may help instill musical concepts, but it needs better follow-through to earn a serious recommendation. (BMG Interactive; 212-930-4403; \$39.95)

—Bill Meyer

Platform: Win CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★

"A Challenging Video Puzzle Game That's Sure To Get Under Your Skin!"



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Mimi & TM MITES

Mimi is a challenging video puzzle game for the whole family!

Guide Mimi through 50 levels, each one more exciting and challenging than the last, and help Mimi get to her goal! There are special objects to help Mimi travel through levels and platforms that quickly move her from one place on the screen to another. Mimi must avoid touching the Mites. She can either stomp them, shoot them with her special weapon, splat them or freeze them to move past them.

These little blue guys can be pretty hard to get around, but every puzzle in Mimi & The Mites has a solution...and it's up to you to find it!

Mimi & The Mites will get under your skin!



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MAKE YOUR OWN MOVIES

Quiet On the Set

Ever wonder how Ingmar Bergman or Alfred Hitchcock got started? Well, your kids may begin their own directorial careers with Microsoft's **3D Movie Maker**. This captivating Windows 95 title lets kids ages 8 and up try their hand at making a movie, but it's sophisticated enough for adults to enjoy too.

McZee, the wacky guide from Creative Writer and Fine Artist, takes aspiring directors to the Projects Room where they learn the basics of movie making. Next, it's off to the Studio. Here kids choose from a cast of more than 30 animated actors and place them in a dozen different, visually intriguing rendered sets—each with nine camera angles. Next they assign the actors any of 20 actions—talking, running, karate-kicking, etc.—and record character motion by dragging each actor through the scene. The program automatically takes care of perspective to create three-dimensional scenes. For example, actors get smaller as they move away and larger as they come forward.

Finally, kids put on the finishing touches: pre-recorded dialogue and sound effects (they can also record their own), as well as titles and background music.

While 3D Movie Maker's options are impressive, the controls are confusing, and the tools aren't always easy to use. Getting the

3D Movie Maker automatically adjusts the perspective.



Young directors can control all the elements of their movie: the setting, the actors, the motion, the music, and the dialogue.

desired results can be tricky and frustrating—even for grown-ups. And the program's automatic verbal help can be more annoying than useful. Our pre-release version ran rather slowly and swallowed up 22MB of disk space, but Microsoft says that the final product will run faster and require about half as much space.

Despite these drawbacks, 3D Movie Maker is a powerful, enthralling title that is great fun for the whole family. Now it's just up to you to cater those elaborate on-set lunches. That's a wrap. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; \$44.95)

—Ann M. Marcus

Platform: Win 95 CD **Rating:** ★ ★ ★ 1/2

Write On

*Kids six to twelve, and even growing:
Need help to get creativity flowing?
If your ideas have run dry,
Maybe this is worth a try
This machine will get you going*



The Amazing Writing Machine is fun—and educational.

search for words and facts. They'll also learn about poetic forms such as haiku, limerick, cinquain, and couplet. And they're encouraged to write daily in the program's journal, which keeps their secrets safe with a password.

Once they're done, kids can illustrate their compositions with original drawings. The program's host of graphics tools and stamps offer plenty of options. The CD-ROM version of the program includes more than 2,000 clip-art images, plus nine special writing environments that feature their own themed stamps.

With The Amazing Writing Machine, don't be surprised if your kids want to write those once-dreaded thank you letters or book-reports—without nagging. Hey, it got me to write that limerick! (Braderbund; 800-521-6263; CD, \$45; floppy, \$35)

—Lee Kuhn

Platform: Win CD, Mac CD, Windows, Mac
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Your kids will be composing clever rhymes like this in no time with Braderbund's **The Amazing Writing Machine**. It's great for children who love to write, and even better for those who don't.

Beginning writers decide what they want to create, such as a story, journal entry, essay, letter, or poem. Then they either personalize ready-to-order texts by changing specific phrases or begin from scratch with help from the Bright Ideas option.

The Amazing Writing Machine is great fun, but it's also a serious writing tutorial. While penning a story, for example, kids learn about all the necessary elements with the Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How buttons. Essayists can get help preparing outlines. Reader Robots give kids a chance to hear what they've written so far, and the Infosaurus lets them



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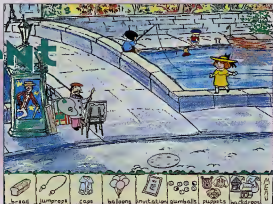
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GOOD FOR GIRLS

Thoroughly Modern Madeline!

To look at her, you'd never guess that the perky and precocious Madeline—the French schoolgirl of book and television fame—is 55 years old. Well, it's true. But the charming mademoiselle is certainly keeping current, debuting in a new CD-ROM game for ages 5 and up. Creative Wonders' **Madeline and the Magnificent Puppet Show** enlists kids to help Madeline get ready for the show by finding the items she'll need to make the stage curtain, puppets, and invitations.

The title begins with the infectious "Madeline" song, then explains the story behind the puppet show: Madeline and company must help their friend by raising money to save his home. Players move about Madeline's world—rendered in beautiful, painterly screens—clicking in different spots to find what they need. Along the way, they'll also engage in creative activities,



Search the city for items to use at the puppet show.

such as painting backgrounds, designing invitations, and making puppets. The title also teaches French or Spanish words (kids choose at the start of the game) in conversations with the game's characters. And an automatic inventory feature and hints from the narrator, actor Christopher Plummer, make it easy for little ones to play without your help.

Madeline and the Magnificent Puppet Show is a delightful game that will appeal especially to young girls. It's about time girls had some games of their own. (Creative Wonders; 800-543-9778; \$39.95)

—Christine Grech



Madeline and friends teach players French and Spanish words.

Platform: Win CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Look Ma, No-Hands



Kids don't need a mouse to play with these mice.



How old is old enough to play a computer game? According to SimCity creator Maxis, even 2-year-olds can join in on the fun. The company's upcoming **Marty and the Trouble with Cheese** lets very young children interact with the adventure by doing away with the need for keyboard or mouse skills. Once the story begins, kids use voice commands (and a microphone) to interact with the program.

The game stars Marty, a lovable gray mouse, who lives in the wall of a house with his mother, father, and little sister Morgan. Marty is sent on an errand to fetch some cheese and gets caught up in an adventure that your child shares.

Kids progress through the story by using voice input. The title doesn't actually interpret what kids say but responds instead to the mere presence of sound. For example, kids play peek-a-boo with Marty as he hides in a block of Swiss cheese by calling out his name, which prompts him to pop out. Players will also help Marty cross a stream and sneak past a sleeping cat. Kids are sure to be delighted by the program's mimicking crow, which copies everything they say into the mike. Look for the clever title in November and more Marty titles next year. (Maxis; 800-526-2947; \$34.95)

—Suzanne Frear

Platform: Win/Mac CD

Available: November

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Thinking I Could suRf on
Red cLouds all day, then
a worM hole riPPed and
twisted mY thouGhts
into toXic waste.

How I



Dispersion caNNon missiles
came toWard Me
like a schOOl of AngelfiSh,
meTallic, all gleaMing.
Hey, tHeY almOst
looked eDible.



HallucinAtions begaN to
happen aLL aroUnd me.
Then I realiZed thOse
Rockets weRe Real and
they thouGht my flyiNg
suckEd. Big tiMe.

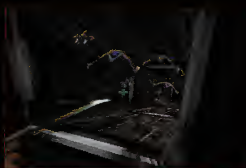
died.



A thouSand plasMa rockEts
taPPed on mY winDshield.
I didn't hEar them knOcking
so they taPPed harDer.



SpINNING my heAd around
in a biLLION directiOns.
Bad moVe. As I wAs
seriOusly violated in a
cross fire from a cloud
that looked as innocent
as a kid holding candy.



Doing a liTTle tunnel spying,
picked the wRong tuNNel
obviOusly as the DOM rocketS
heAding my way decided to do
some expLOring theMselves.
I'll leaVe their intEnded
destiNatiOn to your imagination.



DOing lOOp the lOOp
like a moNkey on a trEE,
then shraPnel, buildiNGs,
and funKy stuFF all hit
Me on my nOse like a
wEt thiCk moUnd of sPit.

You plummet from the sky. You hit your cockpit with bulging eyes. This is no demo, it is you flying that warship. Eight planets await your twitching trigger finger: a spot on your satellite map and the brush of your metallic wings: Terran, L24-D, Ares, New Kroy, Sebek, Yestra, Tiamet, and the ultimate eye twitcher, Fury. Look around your cockpit using your virtual head and fly the impossible with six degrees of freedom. Your joy erupts into a wry smile. A servo laser is your best friend, a customized cockpit and an energy shield the only barrier between you and a sharp jolt back to reality. The reality being, Fury® is one of the first games optimized for Windows® 95. Kill stuff, try stuff, fry, fry some more until it's as natural as breathing. Fight Fury® to the death on multiple missions. In the clouds, on the ground and in netherworld tunnels. Death comes like grains of salt out of a shaker in Fury®. Enjoy them or at least die trying. Fly the "Trial version" of Microsoft Fury® at <http://www.microsoft.com>.



Thinking nothing bLEEds on
this pyraMId-infested
plAnet, then 30 or so bOmbs
explained to me why.
There's no time to bLEEd.

Microsoft

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO TODAY?™



The War is Over: We Won

The PC-entertainment industry has finally come to a realization: Games—at least for the moment—rule the roost.

How do I know this? It's obvious. Not only are the game makers spending money at a record-breaking pace to create ever hotter, more spectacular games, but some of the most die-hard multimedia companies—even Grolier and Compton's NewMedia—are joining the fray. (Of course, it also seems like every game company in the world is getting into the edutainment business—Activision, GT Interactive, LucasArts, Panasonic, and US Gold, for example, are launching kids' titles. But that's a subject for another column.)

What do companies that have built their reps on electronic encyclopedias know about gaming? Beats me, but they're sure ready to give it a try. Who knows, we might even get some good games out of it. Or maybe not.

Either way, the recent rush to hop on the gaming bandwagon is indicative of an industry that has already seen the first of the "Incredible Shrinking Multimedia Makers" (Medio, Compton's, and Grolier have all "downsized," for example). Heck, the numbers just don't work for most multimedia yet. Take a look at Leader Board (page 22), for example. You have to search carefully to find the multimedia among the games in our list of top-selling titles at retail.

I'm more likely to waste a couple hours blowing away some Mechs than I am to poke around in 500 Nations.

By the middle of 1995, the only real multimedia titles (i.e., not a productivity tool like Broderbund's Print Shop Deluxe) in the Top 20 were Microsoft's Encarta Encyclopedia, Disney's Aladdin Activity Center, and Disney's Animated

StoryBook: The Lion King. Of course, that little gem sold extremely well, then made itself famous by getting more bad ink than any multimedia program in history for driving thousands of kids—and parents—nearly to tears trying to get it to run.

Oh, there are other multimedia titles further down the list, but seven basic rules seem to apply to their success. To make it as a multimedia title at retail, a product must be:

- 1) From Microsoft
- 2) From Disney
- 3) Stupefyingly useful
- 4) Clip art

5) About *Star Trek*

6) Cheap

7) From Microsoft

Now, this is all well and good if you're Microsoft or Disney, or happen to have a license from Paramount to do the next *Star Trek* "Cooking with Worf" or "The Poetry of James T. Kirk" title. But Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia 1995 was beaten out by the 1500 Font Mega Pack as of this past June. And neither was in the Top 75. That's not a good sign.

Why is this happening? Well, probably for several reasons. Multimedia technology still hasn't progressed far enough to really catch the interest of the mass market. Prices haven't dropped sufficiently to make people buy a disc when a much cheaper book (that you can read *anywhere*) may be available. Online services are beginning to offer more up-to-date and complete information—often with graphical enhancements—without making you buy a single-purpose title.

Of course, it could all be what I like to call "The Public Television Conundrum." Public TV is a fine institution. It provides a wide variety of educational and special-interest programming designed to enlighten a population that spends far too much time watching *Baywatch*.

Unfortunately, public TV can also be boring as all get-out.

As a result, while I know PBS is probably showing something mind exploding, I'm much more likely to spend time fertilizing my roots with the likes of *Mystery Science Theater 3000*.

The same goes for my computer time. I've got a ton of cool multimedia titles around the house, but I'm more likely to waste a couple hours playing Zoop or blowing away some giant robots in MechWarrior 2 than I am to browse through Wild Africa or poke around in 500 Nations. My brain gets enough calisthenics at work. I mean, when they asked Steve Young and Jerry Rice what they were going to do after winning the 1994 Super Bowl, they said "I'm going to Disney World!" not "I'm going to study Mayan architecture!"

Okay, so they were paid to say that. But you know what I mean.

While I have no doubt that titles defined as multimedia will succeed at some level, I just don't see multimedia ever overtaking gaming as the dominant form of computer-based entertainment. Oh, there'll always be exceptions; after all, half the country watched *The Civil War* series. But gaming will always rule, and for gamers, that's not such a bad thing.



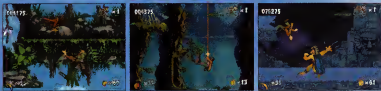
ILLUSTRATION BY ANDREW LUDWIG



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Kid Stuff

Ever get the feeling that your little tyke is going to be Netsurfing rings around you any day now?

Wirehead does. My 2-year-old daughter Katelyn shows all the early qualities likely to lead to an Internet addiction: an inclination to join me at the Macintosh ("Up, Daddy!"); an independent streak worthy of any redhead ("No, Daddy, Katie do it!"); and a seemingly innate understanding of the basic tools she'll need to use ("Mouse! Mouse!"). When she was just a few months old, I'd pop her on my lap at the computer. Looks like I've created a monster.

Mind you, this doesn't really worry me. Katie's generation will handle computers like we handle TVs—without having to think about it. But I have to think about it right now, so I can get her to the online places that'll do her good. Fortunately, there's more than enough good stuff for you to sit down with your child and explore.

And that's no accident. For starters, commercial online services train their marketing beams on young parents like the Empire aims at the Millennium Falcon—we are *prime* targets. But it's also because family values happen to be a good way for onliners to counter the perception that the Internet contains nothing but sex. Yet a third reason is that a lot of the good stuff is on the Internet's World Wide Web, which is an easy way for kids (or you) to get around the Internet.

All that means finding a place online for you and your child generally isn't too tough. America Online, in fact, makes it a total snap; its main menu features a Kids Only button. Click it, and you hit a plethora of stuff for children—the Cartoon Network, Club Kidsoft, and Kids WB! from Warner Brothers, not to mention slightly brainier stuff like National Geographic World and Scholastic Kids' World. And that's not the only place you can tap. Keyword to FC and you get the Family Computing Forum, which has a Rec Room teeming with games and edutainment offerings of all types. Also, many of the subject-oriented entertainment forums, particularly

the Movies area, have zones aimed at feeding kids' interests. And AOL's ability to let you choose where your kids can go makes it a very child-friendly service.

Prodigy isn't far behind. In part, that's because of its ability to link transparently from Prodigy forums to the Web—something Apple's eWorld can now also do. More than that, though, Prodigy has one of the two chief kiddie franchises, Sesame Street. (If you have to ask about the other, you don't *have* kids. Hint: Think insipid purple dinosaur.) Click into the Kids

Zone and Sesame Street to find storybooks with Grover and Elmo, currently the hippest little Muppets, or check out the Letter of the Day. Although it's not heavy on multimedia content, it's a nice little start for kids. And there's plenty more: Carmen Sandiego, Nickelodeon, Homework Helper, and a story zone called Reading Magic all stand out.

In comparison, the Microsoft Network and CompuServe lag

behind, though both aim to boost their kids' content later in 1996. CompuServe will launch a new consumer-oriented service this spring—called, for now, WOW!. In the meantime, CompuServe sports a lot of educational areas and has a by-kids-for-kids area called YDRIVE; Go YDRIVE to get there. It's aimed at slightly older kids, but the Disney/Pocahontas area may amuse a younger audience. Meanwhile, Microsoft is formulating kids' content for MSN, including Family Planet, a Web-based offering from Starwave, and Splash Online, from kiddie CD-ROM developer Splash Studios. And don't forget Disney, which has plans for its own online service in the upcoming year.

And then there's the Web. Despite the Internet's reputation, it's definitely a kid-populated place. Visit The Muppets Home Page (<http://www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/VR/BS/Muppets/muppets.html>), the Children's Pages at Wombat Net (<http://www.batnet.com/wombat/children.html>), tons of sites with children's stories such as *Aesop's Fables* and *The Wizard of Oz*, and much, much more. For a handy guide to the universe of children's resources, log onto Uncle Bob's Kids Page at <http://gagame.www.com/~boba/kids.html>. Make that your jumping-off point, and you and your child can have plenty of Net adventures together.

Find some jammin' online stuff? Let Wirehead know at dstjohn@iftu.com or e2online@aol.com.



It's a Sesame Street party on the Web.

Finding a place online for you and your child generally isn't too tough.

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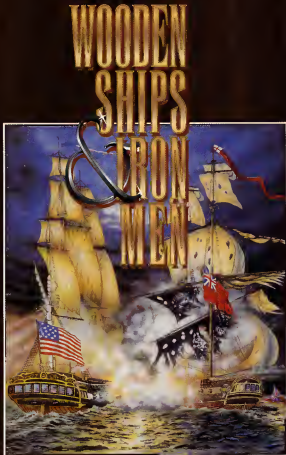
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Family Album

With the holidays fast approaching, the Multimaniac couldn't help but get a little sentimental and start thinking about her family. After all, I have to figure out who to invite for Thanksgiving dinner and, of course, who's on my Christmas list.

All those warm and fuzzy feelings got me reminiscing about the family stories my clan relives (and reshapes) at every gathering. Being the multimedia sort, I decided to preserve those memories for future generations. And what better way to do that than with my trusty PC?

Delrina's Echo Lake, an easy-to-use multimedia program for archiving family milestones, was what I turned to for help. (For a review of Echo Lake, see Spotlight, July 1995, page 24.) Echo Lake really is a family-oriented program: It's laid out like that log cabin at Lake Tahoe where we spent our early summers. Of course, this virtual cabin's main attraction is a nifty desk area that lets you create memory "Books" and get to all the program's features.

I decided to begin with a Book entitled *My So-Called Life*, in honor of my favorite—though short-lived—TV show. Echo Lake asks for a start date, end date, and birth date for your Book. I plugged in the numbers, only to be greeted by something worse than a blank page: an empty tree ring. Yep, a tree ring, as in *family tree*, I guess. Each "Story" in your Book is identified there,

with the most recent events residing in the outermost rings.

Determined to create an event-filled tree ring, the Multimaniac clicked the New Story button and faced a blank page. Where to begin? My mom's recent retirement, my engagement, or further back with that pivotal family journey back to Malta some 13 years ago? Or how about some stories of my grandparents arriving in America in the 1920s?

For a little help prioritizing the milestones, I turned to Echo Lake's Memory Starters. These worksheets let the Multimaniac jot down all her ideas. From here I can pop into the Book and start writing them down. I can also browse through the Inspirator's key historical events and story-starter ideas. Echo Lake also features preformatted pages (like a traditional baby book) that I can simply fill in to fill out my Book.

But the opportunity to write is just a small part of what makes Echo Lake so great. The program lets me easily add all sorts of

multimedia mementos to my entries. The CD-ROM version of Echo Lake has some 80 video clips and 250 pictures (viewable through the Inspirator), plus a bunch of clip art and sound effects. Being the Multimaniac, though, I didn't want anyone else's version of multimedia in my family history. So I scanned in a bunch of family photos, pulled others off the Photo CDs I made after last Christmas, interviewed some family members at my computer and captured their



(brief) thoughts to WAV audio files.

Working with all this memorabilia turned my quick little project into something larger. And I began devoting nearly every waking hour to getting it just right. Since I was trying to distill the entire Grech experience into a single, spectacular multimedia archive, my one regret about Echo Lake is that it doesn't have a family-tree function. It would have been nice to organize all my relatives that way.

But you don't have to be so comprehensive. It's probably better—and more realistic—to tackle your memories in chunks, making separate Books for various topics.

Of course, the busy Multimaniac hasn't finished her Book yet, but she likes to think of it as a work in progress. As for that Christmas gift list, I've got the perfect idea: personalized Books for each family member. I can save my Echo Lake Books—or just Stories from them—to floppy disks. The program adds a runtime Echo Lake viewer, so the lucky recipients needn't own the program to enjoy my creation. But be warned: Multimedia memories use up a lot of storage. Three Stories—only one with a video clip—hogged five floppies. I think I'll wrap them up with a bow! (Delrina; 800-734-2330; Windows, \$50; Win CD, \$60)

With help from Echo Lake, I preserved my family memories on my trusty PC.

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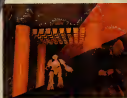
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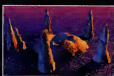
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PCs fight back

By Rick Raymo

Things sure have changed. A short time ago so-called fighting games on the PC just couldn't compare to those you could play in the arcade or on console systems. PC fighting games weren't even close to arcade warriors like Street Fighter II, Mortal Kombat, and Samurai Shodown. But now, we're finally seeing computer-based fighting games that rival the best that the arcade has to offer—there's gore, there's depth, and you get to lob fireballs with the best of them. It's about time.

With the release of Mortal Kombat 3, Super Street Fighter II Turbo, Primal Rage, Battle Beast, FX Fighter, Savage Warriors, One Must Fall 2097, and the upcoming Expect No Mercy (due from MicroForum by the end of the year) and Capcom's own Super

Street Fighter II (due around the same time), in many cases we're no longer talking sad, bitty, little sprites and two-button joystick controls.

Of course, some of these PC fighters are better than others—lots better. We'll tell you how they compare to each other—and to their arcade counterparts. It's time to—excuse the expression—kick some digital butt.

Mortal Kombat 3

For a jaded, long-time game reviewer, being bowled over by a game is as rare as a hassle-free installation of Windows 95. So I was feeling rather cynical when I loaded a two-player, two-character, preliminary demo of Mortal Kombat 3 for the PC from GT Interactive. I truly expected to be underwhelmed. I've played a vast amount of Kombat in the past few years—literally every incarnation of the product.

But the truth is, this early demo was the best version I have ever played. I was shocked. This rendition moves faster (at least



Mortal Kombat 3's static screens are stand-up quality.

Mortal Kombat 3

GT Interactive
800-332-4300



Developer: Sculptured Software
Platform: DOS CD
Available: Now

on a 90MHz Pentium), is more responsive, delivers better sounds, and boasts an overall feel as good—if not better—than the arcade version. Previous PC Kombat versions were dirt in comparison. Shut my mouth and rip off my skull—it's that good.



Geez. You didn't have to rip my body right off of my soul, did you? This would be a Fatalities in MK3.

And that's not even the best part. The biggest news about MK3 for the PC is that it lets up to eight players battle it out across a local-area network. That means you can play full-fledged, round-robin, double-elimination tournaments or free-for-all (choose your opposition from among the seven other players, rather than fighting the winner of the previous match). Network Babalities, anyone? Of course, you can also play a single-player match against the computer, go one-on-one with a friend on a single machine, or go head-to-head via modem.

Any way you play it, you can control MK3 with the keyboard, a two-button controller, a four-button controller, or a six-button controller that gives you four action buttons plus two block buttons.

MK3's 12 new 3-D rendered (from actual photo sources) backgrounds actually scroll on your PC's screen with movement in four full depths of field. You get all the new Encryption Codes (plus a few PC exclusives), the true arcade tunes and sounds (via MIDI so they sound better than the quarter-snatcher), and more.

The only stumbling point with this preliminary version of MK3 is that it is strictly DOS for now, and you may have to wait some time for a Windows 3.1/Windows 95 version.

Look for a full review of MK3 soon. In the meantime, check out GT Interactive's Web site for more information: <http://www.gtinteractive.com>.



Super Street Fighter II Turbo has all the moves—but not the graphics.

Super Street Fighter II Turbo

It's not arcade-perfect, but it's still Street Fighter.

In fact, Super Street Fighter II Turbo (SSF2T) from Gametek isn't half-bad. It doesn't have the glorious graphics of the stand-alone arcade machine, but it does have all the moves, better-than-fair sound, and the patented Street Fighter feel. The previous PC versions of the Street Fighter series lacked that all-important visceral touch.

As is common with European-designed products, installing this fella is something less than a picnic. The game requires a clean boot disk if you are running any form of memory manager on your PC and is relatively finicky when dealing with sound drivers. (For more details, see box on the next page.) Gametek claims you should be able to run SSF2T on a 486/33 with 4MB RAM, but if you try it on anything less than a 50MHz 486DX/2 with 8MB RAM, it's deadly slow and you'll miss out on tons of animation frames. For example, Guile's Sonic Boom move looks atrocious on a wimpy machine, dropping

Super Street Fighter II Turbo

Gametek
800-426-3835

Developer: Eurocom Developments
Platform: DOS CD, DOS
Requires: 486/33, 4MB RAM, VGA, double-speed CD-ROM drive, sound card
List Price: \$49.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ 1/2
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ 1/2
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ 1/2
VALUE:	★ ★ ★

The install stinks, the graphics are only middling, but the game play makes up for everything.

Primal Rage

Time Warner Interactive
408-433-3999

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486DX/25, 4MB RAM, VGA
List Price: \$49.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ 1/2
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ 1/2
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ 1/2

A solid fighting game for a single player with lots of RAM.

Battle Beast

7th Level
800-884-8863

Platform: Win CD
Requires: 486/33, 8MB RAM, Windows 3.1, mouse, sound card
Street Price: \$49.99

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ 1/2
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2
VALUE:	★ ★ ★

Weak controls mar Battle Beast's incredible animation and humor.

FX Fighter

GTE Interactive
800-483-8632

Developer: Argonaut Software
Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486DX/33, 4MB RAM,
VGA, Sound Blaster-compatible
Street Price: \$39.95



GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE: ★ ★ ★

Despite great graphics and lots of moves, this two-button game cedes the championship to Mortal Kombat 3 and Super Street Fighter II Turbo.

Savage Warriors

Mindscape
800-234-3088

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486, 8MB RAM, MS-DOS
5.0, Super VGA
Street Price: \$50



GAME PLAY: ★ ★
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★
VALUE: ★ ★ ★ 1/2

A few glitches and less-than-revolutionary game play keep Savage Warriors in the middle of the fighting pack.

One Must Fall 2097

Epic Megagames
800-972-7434

Developer: Diversions
Entertainment
Platform: DOS
Requires: 386SX, 4MB RAM, VGA
List Price: \$39



GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★ 1/2
SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ 1/2
VALUE: ★ ★ 1/2

An okay shareware title. Before purchasing the full version, try it that way.

virtually all of its explosive visuals.

Graphically, SSF2T is somewhat of an oddity. The intro sequences are absolute arcade quality; they look spectacular. But game play resembles the original Street Fighter II for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System (SNES). The resolution is low and the characters are tiny. While that didn't stop vast numbers of



Primal Rage looks great—if you've got lots of RAM.

SNES gamers from buying SFII, PC gamers expect better graphics. Fortunately, the game play itself far surpasses that of SNES version—and that is definitely what counts.

As for game controls, you can have two players, each with a two-button joystick; one player on a four-button joystick; or one player on a six-button joystick. There is a work-around for adding a second six-button controller, but it requires you to buy a six-button keyboard emulator pad and plug it into the keyboard port. (For more on game controller options, see "Take Control," page 75.)

All in all, even with the toe-stubbing install, this is the best version of a Street

Super Street Fighter II Turbo

Install Tip: Use a clean boot disk, then "REM" out the sound-driver line in the boot disk's CONFIG.SYS file, reboot, install the game, delete the "REM" from the sound-driver line, reboot with the line in place, and then run the game. Tricky, but once you've managed this, you're ready for Street Fighter action on the PC.

Fighter product for the PC, and the decent game play and slick cut scenes should be enough to satisfy hard-core fans of the series.

Primal Rage

Death-dealing dinos come to the PC. But this truly solid rendition of one of last year's most popular arcade games gives new meaning

to the term "memory hog." For a near-arcade play experience, Primal Rage requires 16MB of RAM. Gamers stuck with just 4MB or even 8MB get a graphically scaled-down version of the original with a smaller screen area and about half the number of animations.

But how does it play? For a



You'd swear you're at the arcade when you play Primal Rage.

single player with a four-button controller and 16MB of RAM, Primal Rage places in the top three of PC fighting games. You get seven fighters, tons of special moves, and hilarious hidden games—overall, a very close approximation of the token-taking version.

As a two-player game, even with 16MB of RAM, Rage is a much weaker contender. (And with fighting games, multiple players is what it's all about.) Currently, two-player controls support only one four-button pad with the keyboard or dual two-button pads.

If you have plenty of RAM and don't mind playing alone, I heartily recommend Primal for the PC. Otherwise, you take your chances.

Battle Beast

It's difficult to put Battle Beast by 7th Level into the same category as Mortal Kombat 3. It's not that Battle Beast is not a fighting

"maybe if you didn't play with your worm so much . . ."



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There isn't a better-looking animated fighter on the market than Battle Beast.



A Windows fighting game? Yep, but it's got only two-button controls.

game...it is. It's just that this parody-game has a very different target audience. It's certainly not intended for the gore crowd or the deep six-button, special-move-combo crowd. Battle Beast offers a simpler, amusing alternative with its two-button controls and more simplistic moves. But that's not to say that this Windows game has no depth or that it is simple to beat.

Battle Beast begins with cuddly, fuzzy characters that morph into mechanized mashers in an absolutely wonderful-looking (though lower-violence-quotient) animated setting. Developed by the same crew that produced Monty Python's Complete Waste of Time CD-ROM, Battle Beast puts humor first, and comes through with its share of belly laughs. The superb intros and cut-scenes alone make the game worth checking out.

Battle Beast is chock-full of great looking backgrounds of an act-

ive, three-dimensional cartoon world. There's lots of background movement and even some interaction. Your characters are cartoonish in the extreme—stuff like crazed turtles and mutated rhinos. But they're fun. There's even reasonable artificial intelligence to the computer opponents.

Battle Beast's big drawback is game control. With support for only two-button controls, you're limited to one type of punch and a single kick. Worse than the limited strategic options, playing the game often feels like a case of "push the button and hope the computer notices"—and that's honestly too bad. With more responsive controls, Battle Beast would have been a unique winner.

FX Fighter

This is the best fighting game designed for and run solely on the PC. That said, as a two-button game it can't compare depth and quality-wise with polygon-based games like Virtua Fighter 2 or Tekken, which started in the arcade and are currently available for the CD console systems. The gist is that FX Fighter gives you a partial 3-D environment, while more advanced polygon-based fighters move in a free-roaming plane.

But with SGI-rendered anima-



FX Fighter loses the PC belt to MK3 and SSF2T.

"SHE'S PERFECT.

SHE'S GOT AN ATHLETIC BUILD

LOVELY LONG NAILS

EXOTIC EYES

NIMBLE REFLEXES AND..."

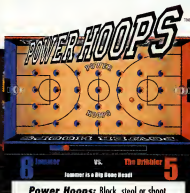
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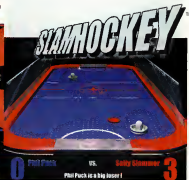
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Krag takes on Siren.

nions and backgrounds—and more than 40 attacks for each of the game's eight fighters, FX Fighter offers plenty of punching, kicking, and special-moves fun. Self-billed as "The Ultimate PC Fighting Game," it does pretty well on its own terms. When we originally reviewed FX Fighter (September 1995, page 60) we rated it very highly, but with Mortal Kombat 3 and Super Street Fighter II Turbo on the scene, it's no longer the reigning champ.

Take Control

When it comes to fighting games, controls are key. Each of the seven games we looked at supports two-button controllers, but they don't all let you use four- or six-button pads. When it comes to two-player fighting, things get even trickier. One player's usually at a disadvantage using the keyboard while the other uses the singularly supported joystick.

Obviously, the best way to go is with a six-button controller like the Capcom Fighter 6 (Capcom; 900-680-2583; PC, \$39.99) or Suncom's SFX (Suncom Technologies; 800-228-7449; PC, \$29.95). For two-player games, you can also go with a second SFX plugged into your keyboard port. (The SFX is a "key-board emulator," which means it can be plugged into a game port or keyboard port.) The problem with this workaround is that the keyboard port's response time is faster than a game port's, so the player using the SFX attached to the keyboard port has an unfair advantage.

For four-button controls, there's the old standby Gravis Game Pad (Advanced Gravis; 800-663-8558; PC, street price \$15).

A word of warning, though: In the world of PCs, not every game controller works with every game.

—RR

(Continued on page 76)

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—PC Gamer magazine

And Next Generation says, "It's the best PC fighting game I've ever played. It definitely rivals 32-bit game consoles..." Well, download the demo, and see for yourself.

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FX FIGHTER



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PC CD-ROM

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back



Paimela puts a hurting on her opponent in *Savage Warriors*.



Try before you buy in *One Must Fall 2097*.

(Continued from page 75)

Savage Warriors

This game won't stand the gaming world on its head. But as a strange combination of 2-D and 3-D, it may be worth your time. With ten fighters (plus four hidden characters, including a cocktail waitress!), tons of cheat codes (cocktail waitress included), and three special moves for each character, Mindscape's *Savage Warriors* gives it the old college try. But sadly, the school was built on an insect-ridden swamp (with glitches ranging from character dropouts to computer crashes), and the game's two-button controls don't offer enough depth for the game to be worth all the bugs. (For a more complete picture, see our review, November 1995, page 126.)

One Must Fall 2097

One Must Fall 2097 from Epic Megagames—a well-known shareware company—shows you what a couple of guys with time on their hands can do. Mind you, the guys at developer Diversion Entertainment know their fighting games, are better than fair codemasters, and put together a pretty good combo system for a two-button game. The graphics aren't anything to crow about, but this game ain't bad for what it is. Pick up the demo version by checking into one of the online services' game forums or grabbing it off of your favorite local BBS.

Fight Dirty

It's no fun losing. If you want to win, and you don't care how, try these cheats.

Super Street Fighter II Turbo

To play as the Super version of each character, pick your favorite with a short jab at the player-select screen. Then use the following moves (R=right; L=left; U=up; D=down) and finish up the cheat with a second short jab button push.

Ryu: R, R, R, L
Honda: U, U, U, D
Blanka: R, L, L, L
Guile: U, D, D, D
Hawk: R, R, L, L
Felion: L, L, R, R
Bison: R, L, L, R
Sagat: U, D, D, U
Ken: L, L, L, R
Chunli: D, D, D, U
Zangief: L, R, R, R
Dhalsim: D, U, U, U
Cammy: U, U, D, D
DeeJay: D, D, U, U
Balrog: L, R, R, L
Vega: D, U, U, D

To play as Akuma, at the player-select screen go to Ryu and wait four seconds, go to Guile and wait four seconds, go to Hawk and wait four seconds, go back to Ryu and wait four seconds, do a short jab.

Finally, developer Eurocom says there are cheats for recharging your energy and killing instantly. Happy hacking trying to find them.

Battle Beast

To get to the Lumber Yard bonus entrance: Smack the button under the saw by hitting the A key and Up control. When enabled, run to the hole that opens in the second level of the wood floor. But watch out for that saw blade.

For invincibility in bonus rounds: Enter ORUFO.

For Z-axis movement: Enter XUS_D3.

To get a special move: Enter HNTIOH-12

FX Fighter

Most of this game's cheats are actually patches (such as one that lets you play as Rygi!) that you can download from various online services and World Wide Web sites. (Try the FX Fighter page at <http://www.uma.edu/nlhome/m447/reinb001/mvchest.html> for details.) However, there is one built-in cheat.

To control the camera's view of the action, press the "Home" key during a match. Then use the arrow keys to move the camera around. The Page Up and Page Down keys zoom the camera in and out.

Savage Warrior

To enable these codes, type CHEAT at the main menu. Then choose the Secret Way option, and type the following:

WOO: Complete your special moves using zero energy
NBK: Play only a single round
TYSON: Turns off special moves
REPLAY: Allow 3-D combat
DUNK: Enable play as Scott (works only in two-player bouts)
ELEVENTH: Enable play as the Master (works only in two-player bouts)
GARDENER: Enable play as Tom (works only in two-player bouts)
NUMBERONE: Enable play as Captain (works only in two-player bouts)
EVILDEATH: More blood
NOPAIN: No weapons
NOGAIN: Weapons can be knocked out of fighter's hands
SNOWWHITE: Miniature players
CIRCUS: Enable Arena play in two-player bouts

EASYSPECIAL MOVES: Make the moves much easier. The three are: Toward, Toward, Punch; Away, Toward, Punch; and Toward, Toward, Kick

One Must Fall 2097

Access the hidden menu anytime during the game by pressing and holding the number keys 2, 0, 9, and 7 simultaneously. This gives you a bunch of new options, including increased height, vitality, damage, difficulty, and more.

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Holiday Gift Guide

Flip through the pages of *Electronic Entertainment* or browse the aisles of your favorite computer store, and it hits you like a ton of bricks: There are a lot of great PC games and multimedia CD-ROMs to choose from. And this season, new titles, kids' edutainment, and multimedia hardware is arriving every day.

Whew! The confusion is enough to send you screaming from the superstore. Fortunately, it doesn't have to be that way. The 65 suggestions in our exclusive gift guide will help make short work of your holiday shopping.

Of course, if you see something you really like, we won't tell if you pick it up for yourself!

Games Galore

Let them play during the holidays with the gift of a hot new computer game.

Whether your friends and family are into flight sims or fantasy role playing, we've got you covered. And if you're buying for a Mac gamer, check out "Mac Gifts," page 83.

If action is the name of their game, you can't go wrong with Origin's *Crusader: No Remorse*. Not another Doom-style first-person-perspective shooting game, this action/adventure uses an isometric view that abounds with realistic detail, including impressive explosions. (For a full

65 of the hottest games, multimedia titles, entertainment hardware, and kids' programs

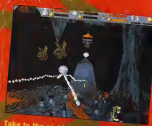
game is better than an episode of *Deep Space Nine*.

Brain-drain addicts are easy to please with a trio of innovative titles. First, there's Viacom New Media's abstract *Zoop*, which is billed as the next Tetris. For slicker, more complex puzzle action, Dongleware's *Bolo* has players use a silver ball to clear out bricks while avoiding black holes, bombs, and

review of *Crusader*, see page 118.)

Another great action game to put under the tree: Electronic Arts' *Fade to Black*, the sequel to *Flashback*. Gorgeous 3-D graphics and challenging puzzles highlight this alien-busting shooter. Still not sure? Take your favorite gamer on a wild ride with *Magic Carpet II*. This sequel to last year's wildly popular high-flying, spell-casting game beefs up the plot and tones down the difficulty. (For a full review of *Magic Carpet II*, see page 152.)

If adventure's more their thing, Sierra On-Line's interactive horror movie *Phantasmagoria* is just the ticket. Players control video characters that explore the beautifully rendered environments of a haunted house. Mind-bending puzzles and a compelling story guarantee hours of intrigue. Trekkers, on the other hand, will have Spectrum HoloByte's *Star Trek: The Next Generation "A Final Unity"* at the top of their lists. With a story line that could be taken directly from the hit TV series, authentic character voices, and dazzling cut scenes, this



Take to the night skies in *Magic Carpet II*.



Crusader: No Remorse is a blast.

By Christine Grech

other hazards. Finally, for multiplayer fun, check out Berkeley Systems' **You Don't Know Jack**. This grown-up trivia game turns your PC into a game show, complete with pop-culture questions and high-energy music and sound effects.

High flyers will love **Apache The Combat Helicopter Simulation**.

A sophisticated flight model, crisp Super VGA graphics, seven enemy skill levels, two flying modes, and a wide array of mission choices make it the best chopper sim around. (For a full review of Apache, see page 134.) Activision's stylish **MechWarrior 2**, meanwhile, puts players in control of a futuristic battle robot.

For role players, something new and different is in order. **Thunderscape** is Strategic Simulations' first original offering in the genre spawned by *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*. In *Thunderscape's* World of Aden, players lead a small party on a mission to save the fantasy realm. Eight races and eleven occupations let players



Mac and PC gamers alike can slay fierce monsters in **Dungeon Master II**.

manace to its predecessor's beautiful graphics, easy-to-use aiming and shot system, and head-to-head contests with the pros.

The best tactic to please strategy fans? Simply pick up a copy of Sir-Tech's **Jagged Alliance**. In this turn-based game, players control a band of eight hired guns as they attempt

to recapture an island from an evil scientist. With 100 unique mercenaries to choose from, the game becomes a delicate balancing act of skills and personalities.

If you can't decide on a single game, give them a choice with Carabela Tek's **Jam Pak**. For a little more than the price of a single game, you get four hot titles: *Panzer General* (World War II strategy), *Fleet Defender* (naval flight sim), *IndyCar Racing* (driving sim), and *System Shock* (action/adventure).

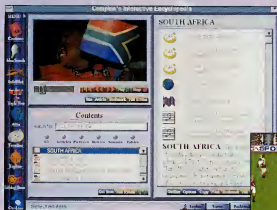
Budget buyers can present an even lower-cost quartet of great games with **LucasArts Archives, Vol. 1**. This compilation of classics has the action/adventure *Indiana Jones* and the *Fate of Atlantis*, the comic adventures *Sam and Max Hit the Road* and *Day of the Tentacle*, and *Rebel Assault Special Edition*, which includes three levels from the wildly popular *Star Wars* shooter.

Multimedia Must-Haves

Who says you can't please all of the people all of the time? You can with the gift of multimedia. Whether they use a PC or Mac, favor a cabernet over a Monet, or prefer ancient history to current events, there's a CD-ROM for just about everyone.

The newest edition of an electronic encyclopedia is always a great gift—especially for families. New this year? Online links that let users add the latest articles and pictures to the encyclopedia's already vast resources.

Microsoft's **Encarta Encyclopedia '96** offers monthly updates that you download—free—through the Microsoft Network or the company's Web page. **Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia 1996** currently lets you browse text articles in its America Online forum, and the company plans to post a Web page with more advanced features



Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia 1996 has online links, so you're always up to date.

create custom characters. Another great role-playing choice—for Mac gamers, too—is Interplay's **Dungeon Master II, The Legend of Skullkeep**. This sequel to the RPG classic features clever computer adversaries and lots of realistic detail.

Sporting types will score big with any of the new offerings from Electronic Arts. Soccer fanatics won't be able to get enough of EA's terrific new **FIFA '96**. (For a full review of FIFA '96, see page 162.) The company's excellent **NHL Hockey '96** also boasts Super VGA graphics, real teams and players, and eight camera views. (For a full review, see page 160.) And you can shoot a hole-in-one with computer duffers by giving them **PGA Tour '96**. It adds improved perfor-



FIFA '96 Soccer is even more gorgeous and even more fun.

by the end of the year. The **1996 Grolier's Encyclopedia** links to some 12,000 CompuServe sites that correspond to topics in the encyclopedia. (Look for full reviews of all three encyclopedias next month.)

For a more focused reference, pick up a copy of **Our Times: Multimedia Encyclopedia of the 20th Century**. Based on the book of the same name, the CD-ROM documents all the international milestones—politics, business, sports, art, culture, personalities, and events—of the last 100 years. Narrated by the stentorian voice of James Earl Jones, *Our Times* lays it all out in an attractive, easy-to-

Mac Gifts

What's new in Mac games? Old PC games, that's what. **Doom II** finally lets Mac gamers blast away at CacoDemons and other monsters as they traverse the dark passageways of Hell. **Descent** lets action fans fly and shoot. In **Dark Forces**, players take on the role of a Rebel mercenary fighting it out with the Empire's Stormtroopers in this *Star Wars* action shooter.

But it's not all old news: **Marathon 2: Durandal**, the sequel to the first big-time Mac *Doom* clone, is a lot of fun, too. Players get more aliens—and more fun—as they make their way through a spaceship. And the abstract action/puz-



Doom is a hit on the Mac, too.

zler **Zoop** makes a simultaneous debut on multiple platforms, including the Mac. It's simple, fast, and addictive.

Mac gamers—especially flight-sim fans—will kiss you under the mistletoe if you bring 'em a first-rate joystick like **ThrustMaster's FLCS** for the Mac. Like its PC counterpart, it has one hat switch, a trigger, and three fire buttons. —CG



Life's Greatest Mysteries has all the answers.

commonly asked questions about our bodies and minds. This engaging title—from the same folks who created the top-notch A.D.A.M. *The Inside Story*—explains why people faint, why we daydream, how to improve your memory, and what really causes colds.

If they enjoyed the movie *Apollo 13*, give them the story behind the story with *Voyager's For All Mankind*. This beautifully executed title presents the stories of the two dozen Americans who made history in

navigate interface. As a bonus, publisher Vicarious throws in the text of the *Columbia Encyclopedia*.

For more family fun, check out **Life's Greatest Mysteries**. This title takes a humorous approach to answering 40



Beer Hunter: strong stuff for suds hounds.

Make your Descent to a higher level.



Game Runner! works with *Descent* and hundreds of other games to let you move faster, react quicker and, yes, occasionally cheat. Call 800-354-3222 or your dealer for details.

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the Apollo missions.

It's OK to drink and CD-ROM drive. Help your favorite beer aficionado go beyond Bud and Coors with Discovery Channel Multimedia's **The Beer Hunter**. Wine drinkers will raise a toast to the **Microsoft Wine**

Guide. Noted wine critic Oz Clark covers the basics of wine tasting, presents an overview of wine varietals and gives some 1,800 recommendations in a searchable wine encyclopedia.

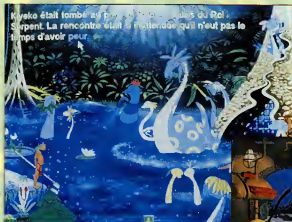
Indulge **A Passion for Art** with this outstanding museum on a disc. Give lovers of Post-Impressionist art the chance to view a stunning collection of works by Renoir, Cezanne, and Matisse. The Corbis disc opens the doors to the Barnes Gallery, which had been closed to the public for some 70 years. Avant-garde types will want to visit performance artist Laurie Anderson's **Puppet Motel** from Voyager. The Hallway of Time leads to more than 30 environments filled with music, bits of Anderson's multimedia stage show, and interactive elements.



Embark on a virtual safari in Wild Africa.



Every child's favorite bear comes to the computer.



Beautiful graphics and five languages highlight Kiyeko and the Lost Night.

Armchair travelers will thank you for Sumeria's **Wild Africa: Ngorongoro, Serengeti, Tarangire**, a virtual safari through three of Tanzania's best-known wildlife preserves. Wild Africa brings it all up close and personal with beautiful original photographs and movies of the

breathhtaking scenery, exotic animals and birds, and native plants.

Screen savers make fun, whimsical gifts. Fans of TSR's **Advanced Dungeons and Dragons** games will lose themselves in **Riddle of the Runes: Worlds of TSR**. Its three modules display images from TSR's beloved fantasy worlds.

Toys for Tots

Why not buy the kids on your list something that's fun—but that may also teach them something? Kids love to play with computers, and educational CD-ROMs are a lot better for them



Fun with Electronics offers hands-on activities for kids.

than the typical Saturday-morning cartoons.

Interactive storybooks are always good bets for prereaders and new readers. One of the best new releases is **Dr. Seuss's ABC's** from Living Books. For ages 3 to 7, it brings Seuss's characters and rhymes to life with unexpected and amusing animation. Another classic making its way to the computer is the **Adventures of Peter Rabbit and Benjamin Bunny**. This Mindscape title for ages 3 to 7 has delicate screens that capture the essence of Potter's books; the whimsical animations and learning games add excitement.

Another surefire crowd pleaser is **Disney's Animated StoryBook: Winnie the Pooh and the Honey Tree**. Watching the antics of the honey-lovin' bear and his friends will entice children ages 3 to 8 to spend time at the computer. Sing-alongs and games complement the story. And for something new, consider Ubi Soft's **Kiyeko and the Lost Night**, a multicultural folk tale of how a young Amazonian Indian boy saves his village. British actor Ben Kingsley provides eloquent narration in



Kids take a field trip under the sea in the new Magic School Bus.

The Bargain Hunter: Gifts Under \$25

You may be on a budget, but that doesn't mean you can't give a great multimedia gift. Here are some suggestions that won't break the bank:

Bookworms will bury themselves in Time Warner's **Quick Reads**. Each multimedia version of a best-selling nonfiction book fits on a single floppy disk and costs less than \$15. Choose from more than 30 titles, including *How to Buy Stocks*, *American Vegetarian Cookbook*, and *The Complete Wedding Planner*.

Would you believe that you can get gamers five titles for less than \$25? You can with Electronic Arts' **Bullfrog Pak**, which includes strategy games *Populous I and II*, *Power Monger*, *ThemePark*, and *Syndicate*. For a mix of game genres, grab Encore Software's **Ultimate Game Collection**, which includes *Quantum Gate*, *Spectre VR*, and *Spear of Destiny*, plus the first six *Ultima* games.

For a low-priced hardware gift, consider the **SoundJack**.

This handy little device plugs into the sound card for easy-to-access volume control. You also get a nifty set of purple headphones.

And for the kids, start with Byron Preiss's **BABY-ROM**. Kids less

than a year old can interact with colors, sounds, and pictures as they play at the keyboard. For the 4-and-up crowd, there's a handful of **Mighty Morphin Power Rangers** titles, including a coloring book, jigsaw puzzles, a print kit, a screen saver, and a movie maker. All five titles feature footage from the television series and recent movie. For something a little more educational, try **Ozzy's Travels—Destination: Mexico**. The engaging title for ages 5 to 10 teaches kids about Mexican culture with fun games they can play at the computer as well as a bunch of activities—tortilla making, an Aztec calendar, and a piñata—to do away from the computer. —CG



Get the Power Rangers—without spending a lot of money.

Meet your Doom faster.



Game Runner! works with *Doom*, *Doom II* and hundreds of other games to let you move faster, react quicker and, yes, occasionally cheat. Call 800-354-3222 or your dealer for details.

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a choice of five languages, and lush, painterly graphics create a unique look; the title is suitable for ages 4 and up.

The older set can try their hand at creating original stories with Theatrix Interactive's **Hollywood**. This innovative title puts kids ages 9 and older in control of their own productions: sets, characters, action, sound, and dialogue. Pointing, clicking, and typing leads to impressive results.

Karaoke has never been as fun as **Fisher-Price Sing-Alongs: Barnyard Rhythms and Moos**. Visitors ages 3 to 7 explore the farm, meet the animals, and learn their special songs. You can find more musical fun in **Menlo the Frog-A Musical Fairy Tale**. This animated story for ages 3 to 7 teaches basic music concepts



Up by six. Third down. Five to go. Two minutes remaining.

This is a game of numbers. And they could add up to your very own Super Bowl ring.

NFL™ Math on CD-ROM or floppy. It's how you play the game that counts.



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as kids play games and follow the tale of Menlo and friends.

Introduce youngsters to the world of science with a trio of fun, engaging titles. Philips's **Fun with Electronics** is the perfect gift for the child who'd rather take the computer apart than play at it. For ages 8 and up, the disc comes with a workbook that kids assemble, then use to conduct hands-on science experiments. Budding natural scientists will want to try the **Multimedia Bird Book** or the **Multimedia Bug Book**, which also encourage activities away from the computer.

This pair of science games teaches kids ages 6 to 12 about the various species as they go on a hunt to find them all.

Finally, Scholastic's **The Magic School Bus Explores the Ocean** sends Ms. Frizzle and company on a field trip beneath the sea. A treasure hunt teaches kids ages 6 to 10 about ocean habitats. Games and "science experiments" put the concepts to the test.

It's the old misdirection play. **NFL Math** uses sports to help interest kids in arithmetic. Licensed by the league and its players, the title shows kids ages 7 to 12 how math can affect the outcome of an exciting football contest, which comes complete with announcer-style narration, crowd noises, and 3-D animations.

Hot Holiday Hardware

As entertainment software gets ever more whizzy, your computer has to keep up, too. Multimedia hardware makes a great gift—and no, it doesn't have to cost a fortune. Of course, if you're feeling generous, you can always spring for a big-ticket item like a new computer. We're sure the recipients won't mind.

If, indeed, you're in the market for a PC, why not go for one that looks as good as the games it plays? Boring beige gets the boot with Acer's new **Aspire** line of designer PCs. We recommend the teal-green desktop Pentium 75 model, which has a quad-speed CD-ROM drive, 8MB of RAM, an 850MB hard drive, a monitor with built-in speakers, and a 14.4Kbps modem, for about \$1,900. The Aspire desktop models are a better choice than Acer's tower systems, which undermine their beefier hardware configuration with flimsy construction and poor case design (see page 44 for review).

For the Mac-minded, you can't go wrong with Apple's new **Performa 5200 CD**, a 75MHz Power PC with a quad-speed CD-ROM drive, 8MB of RAM, an 800MB hard drive, and a built-in monitor—all for about \$2,000. Apple throws in a bundle of kids' titles, reference works, and productivity titles—but no games. (For the latest in Mac games, see "Mac Gifts," page 83.)

If a complete computer will break your budget, modernize their existing machine with a multimedia upgrade kit. Diamond Multimedia's state-of-the-art **Ultra Kit 8000** packs a wallop with an



Acer's Aspire PC is sleek and colorful.

Let your Wing Commander take off.



Game Runner!™ works with Wing Commander and hundreds of other games to let you move faster, react quicker and, yes, occasionally cheat.

Call 800-354-3222 or your dealer for details.

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Holiday Gift Guide Shopping List

Advanced Gravis GrIP System Advanced Gravis; 800-863-8558; PC; approximately \$100

Adventures of Peter Rabbit and

Benjamin Bunny Mindscape; 800-234-3088; Mac CD, Win CD; \$35

Apache The Combat Helicopter

Simulation Interactive Magic; 800-789-1534; DOS CD; \$69.95

Aspire Aor of America; 800-368-2237; PC; \$1,800, plus \$299 for 14-inch monitor

BABY-ROM Byron Preiss; 212-989-6252; Win CD, Mac CD; \$19.95

The Beer Hunter Discovery Channel Multimedia; 800-762-2189; Win CD, Mac CD; \$39.95

Bolo Dongleware; 800-228-6993; DOS CD; \$39.99

Bullfrog Pak Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525; DOS CD; \$19.95-\$24.95

Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia 1996 Compton's NewMedia; 800-261-6109; Win CD, Mac CD; \$59.95

Crusader: No Remorse Origin Systems; 800-245-5425; DOS CD; \$55-\$65

Dark Forces LucasArts Entertainment; 800-782-7927; DOS CD, Mac CD; \$49.95

Descent Interplay; 800-969-4263; DOS CD, Mac CD; \$50

Disney's Animated StoryBook: Winnie the Pooh and the Honey Tree Disney Interactive; 800-688-1520; Win CD; street price \$30

Doom II GT Interactive; 800-332-4300; DOS CD, Mac CD; \$40

Dr. Seuss's ABC's Living Books; 800-776-4724; Win/Mac CD, Win 95 CD, Power Mac CD; street price \$40

Dungeon Master II, The Legend of Skullkeep Interplay; 800-969-4863; DOS CD, Mac CD; \$39.95

Encarta Encyclopedia 96 Microsoft; 800-426-9400; Win CD, Mac CD; \$54.95

F-15E Talon Suncom Technologies; 800-444-3699; PC; \$129.95

Fade to Black Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525; DOS CD; \$59.95

FIFA '96 Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525; DOS CD; \$59.95

Fisher-Price Sing-Alongs: Barnyard Rhythms and Moos Davidson & Associates;

800-545-7677; Win CD; \$30

For All Mankind Voyager; 800-446-2001; Win/Mac CD; \$39.95

Fun with Electronics Philips Media Home and Family Entertainment; 800-340-7888; Win CD; \$44.99

Fury² Microsoft; 800-426-9400; Win CD, Win 95 CD; \$44.95

Grolier's Encyclopedia 1996 Grolier Electronic Publishing; 800-285-4534; Win CD, Mac CD; \$49.95

Hollywood Theatrix Interactive; 800-955-8749; Win/Mac CD; \$39.95

Jagged Alliance Ste-Tech Software; 800-447-1230; DOS CD; street price \$50

Jam Pak Carbelia Tek; 415-873-6484; DOS CD; \$79.95

Kiyeko and the Lost Night Ubi Soft; 415-332-5011; Win CD, Mac CD; \$29.95

Labtec LCS-3210 Labtec; 360-896-2000; PC; \$100

Life's Greatest Mysteries A.D.A.M. Software; 800-408-2326; Win CD, Mac CD; \$39.95

LucasArts Archives, Vol. 1; LucasArts Entertainment; 800-782-7925; DOS CD; \$29.95

Magic Carpet II Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525; DOS CD; street price \$49.99

Marathon 2: Durandal Bungie Software; 800-332-4300; Mac CD; \$79.99

MechWarrior 2 Activision; 800-477-3650; DOS CD; \$59.95

Menlo the Frog—A Musical Fairy Tale Windy Hill Productions; 800-354-6150; Win/Mac CD, Win 95 CD; \$39.95

Microsoft Cinemania 96 Microsoft; 800-426-9400; Win 95 CD; \$34.95

Microsoft Wine Guide Microsoft; 800-426-9400; Win CD, Mac CD; \$34.95

Mighty Morphin Power Rangers Saban Interactive; 818-972-4800; Win CD, less than \$20 each

Multimedia Bird Book and Multimedia Bug Book Workman/Swift; 800-237-9383; Win/Mac CD; \$49.95 each

NFL Math Sanctuary Woods; 800-872-3518; Windows, Win 95 CD, Mac, Mac CD; \$39.95

NHL Hockey '96 Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525; DOS CD; \$59.95

Our Times: Multimedia Encyclopedia of the 20th Century Vicarious; 415-610-8300; Win CD, Mac CD; \$69.95

Ozzie's Travels—Destination: Mexico Digital Impact; 800-775-4232; Win/Mac CD; \$24.95

A Passion for Art Corbis; 208-649-3997; Win CD, Mac CD; \$49

PerfectWorks for Kids Novel; 800-451-5151; Win 95; \$39.95

Performa 5200 CD Apple Computer; 800-776-2333; Mac; \$1,999-\$2,299

PGA Tour '96 Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525; DOS CD, Mac CD; \$64.95

Phantasmagoria Sierra On-Line; 800-757-7707; Win/DOS CD; \$69.95

Puppet Motel Voyager; 800-446-2001; Mac CD; \$39.95

Quick Reads Time Warner; 212-522-7200; Windows; less than \$13 each

Riddle of the Runes: Worlds of TSR U.S. Gold; 415-693-0297; Win CD; \$19.95

Scholastic's The Magic School Bus Explores the Ocean Microsoft; 800-426-9400; Win CD; \$44.95

SideWinder 3D Pro Microsoft; 800-426-9400; PC; \$59.95

SoundJack Enhance Cable Technology; 800-717-8757; PC; \$24.99

Star Trek: The Next Generation "A Final Unity" Spectrum HoloByte; 800-695-4263; DOS CD; \$60

Supra Simple Internet Supra Technologies; 800-727-8772; PC; \$179

ThrustMaster FLCs ThrustMaster; 503-639-3200; Mac; \$149.95

Thunderscape Strategic Simulations; 800-601-7529; DOS CD; \$49

Ultimate Game Collection Encore Software; 800-507-1375; DOS CD; \$24.99

Ultra Kit 8000 Diamond Multimedia; 800-468-5848; PC; \$649

Wild Africa: Ngorongoro, Serengeti, Taramire Sumeria; 415-904-0800; Win/Mac CD; \$49.95


You Don't Know Jack Berkeley Systems; 800-344-5541; Win/Mac CD; street price \$30

Zoop Viacom New Media; 800-469-2539; DOS, Windows, Mac; \$39.95



Pump up the volume with Labtec's LCS-3210 speakers.

hardware gifts include Labtec's small but powerful **LCS-3210** speakers, or a fast 28.8Kbps fax/modem like the **Supra Simple Internet**. It's perfect for Internet newbies because it comes with the Mosaic Web browser and the Internet Directory.

Dedicated gamers are always searching for the best controllers. Help them out with the digital **Advanced Gravis Grip System**, made up of a breakout box and two controllers. It offers automatic calibration, faster response, and support for multiple controllers on a single PC. Flight simmers will soar with a slick, programmable joystick like the Suncom **F-15E Talon**, which sports four memory banks, four buttons, and two four-way hat switches. 

eight-speed CD-ROM drive, a 3-D wavetable sound card, Yamaha speakers, four classic games (*Myst*, *Magie Carpet*, *Rebel Assault*, and *SimCity 2000*), and Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia 1996.

More modest

Windows 95 Winners

Windows 95 converts will be pleased with gifts designed especially for their memory-hungry operating system. No surprise that many of the early titles are from Microsoft itself!

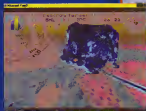
The latest version of the company's movie guide, **Microsoft Cinemania '96** is strictly for Win 95. Along with the year's movie updates on the disc, Cinemania now links to an online database (through the Web and Microsoft Network) from which you can download up-to-the minute reviews.

For Win 95 gaming action, by Microsoft's **Fury²**, a Windows 95 version of *Terminal Velocity*, the hot action fly-and-shoot game from 3D Realms.

You'll find **Fury²**—and all your games—more fun with Microsoft's **SideWinder 3D Pro** digital joystick. The SideWinder is more accurate than old analog sticks, and it's durable too. It works with non-Win 95 systems too, but its support for Microsoft's Direct Input Standard means no more joystick calibration and better responsiveness for Win 95 gamers.

Finally, for the kids, check out **PerfectWorks for Kids**, a desktop environment for youngsters 4 to 10 that has a word processor, painting and drawing programs, a calendar, an address book for fax and e-mail (via a direct link to America Online), and talking help.

—CG



Windows 95 gamers can get in on the action with **Fury²**.

Advertisement

IT'S YOUR FIRST DAY ON THE JOB. GET A CLUE.



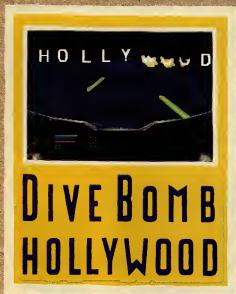
The body was found bound and gagged. Even your grandmother could tell this was no accident. Welcome to the gripping, ultra-realistic world of **SFPD: HOMICIDE**™ where you're the chief investigator in an actual case from the files of San Francisco homicide detective Frank Falzon.

From collecting evidence to interrogating suspects, it's up to you to uncover the real story and make an arrest. With 40 fascinating characters and 20 Bay Area locations — over 80 minutes of full-motion video in all — **SFPD: HOMICIDE** is the most authentic true-crime mystery ever created. Get it at your local software retailer. Or call 800-262-9791. Sorry, donuts not included.



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Shockwave Assault on PlayStation has over 50 minutes of full-motion video. And puts you in photo-realistic locations around the world where you can save the planet from alien invasion in 15 different ground-level missions. With checkpoints that allow you to continue mid-game.

Don't call your travel agent for a reservation. Chances are the aliens have destroyed their offices.

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Destruction

LOVE THY NEIGHBOR.
WRECK HIS CAR.

derby

R18+ TO ADULTS



AGES 6+



PC
CD
ROM

"It's the most impressive PlayStation game yet"
Next Generation

"A carnage-filled crunch fest" Die Hard Game Fan

"The most realistic crashes we've ever seen"
Game Players

"This is stock car racing on steroids"
Electronic Gaming Monthly



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Games GO Online

From Daily Mysteries on America Online to Deathmatches on DWANGO, your modem can plug you into a host of new challenges.

By Rick Raymo

You've been burning up your modem, cruising the World Wide Web, and haunting your favorite game forums. Ready for the real thing? Check out the newest breed of online games. Not just talk—you're in for slick graphics, unique challenges, and real-time contests with human players.

Of course, online games aren't new. The major online services have offered games—mostly text-based adventures—via modem since way back when a Georgia peanut farmer was chief exec (for the politically blocked, that's the late '70s). While online games like Diplomacy had devoted followings, they couldn't really compete with games you could buy at the store—not at one e-mail move a week.

The question has always been, why should you pay around \$2 an hour to play a not-so-spectacular game online when you can buy the latest, state-of-the-art extravaganza for around \$50 and play it 'till you got tired of it—up to 50 hours or more?

As the commercial online services grow in size and sophistication, however, they've begun to realize that they've got to offer gaming experiences that you just can't get anywhere else—and that means

games—and the same old text-based adventures. Ironically, it's the second-tier services, like GENie, and dedicated gaming services, including the ImagiNation Network and MPG-Net, that are delivering on the promise of online gaming. Meanwhile, newcomers like DWANGO, the Total Entertainment



Hexam: Beyond Heretic is one of the newest games you can play on DWANGO.

original games, ever-changing storylines and situations, and the chance to play against a single player across town or 100 people around the globe.

Even so, the three major services—America Online, CompuServe, and Prodigy—have been more talk than action. They all say they have compelling online games in the works, but up to now it's been mostly a case of simple challenges—trivia, board, and card

Network, and the upcoming Papyrus Network and Confirmed Kill (for more on Confirmed Kill, see November 1995, page 112 and Game News, page 116) are injecting new life into the genre.

With smaller services already offering compelling games, and the bigger services locked in mortal combat to grab as many subscribers as possible, the scramble is on to get the biggest, best, and strongest multiplayer interactive experience to home gamers—as soon as possible. Expect new offerings in the

The commercial online services and dedicated gaming services aren't the only places to experience online gaming. Look for coverage of the hottest Internet games in an upcoming issue.

months ahead from the big three, as well as from the new Microsoft Network (whose current online gaming consists only of a link to MPG-Net), AT&T Interchange, and News Corp./MCI online (Delphi), among others.

Our exclusive look at online gaming will help you find the fun that's out there today, and where to look for even more gaming excitement tomorrow.

DWANGO

No, we're not talking Aussie canine here. DWANGO stands for Dial-up Wide-Area Network Gaming Operation. Touting itself as the nation's premier online service dedicated exclusively to online gaming, these folks aren't far off that mark. The company has formed



Challenge other computer coaches around the globe in INN's Football Online.

over the phone lines.

The popularity of Doom makes this service a clear winner. Right now the games you can play include Doom, Doom II, Ultimate Doom, Hexen, and Heretic, but the company is frantically attempting to get exclusive licenses on as many popular multiplayer games as possible. Terminal Velocity, Tek War, and Witchaven have just been added, and rumor has it that MechWarrior 2 is next on the list, with more top titles to follow.

If you live in one of 28 major metropolitan areas, you can connect with a local call, while those residing in the virtual boonies must pay extra to use a long-dis-

alliances with multi-player-game vendors, starting with Doom-maker id Software, and gives you the chance to play Deathmatch or team-play games

tance number—normal long-distance charges apply in addition to hourly fees. DWANGO is adding more local service numbers as fast as it can.

If you own one or more of the supported games, try typing DWANGO at your C: prompt in that game's directory for information on how to log on. Doom/Heretic Deathmatches allow up to four simultaneous players, while Terminal Velocity gives six players the opportunity to wait.

ImagINation Network

The pioneer ImagINation Network (INN) has stumbled in the past, but is well on the road back to greatness with a new version of the software you use to connect and play the service's games. Version 2.4 of INN adds lots of cool stuff, but the biggest news here is Front Page Sports' Football Online in the new Arena section. Now you can take on players around the world in a very authentic recreation of the boxed retail version. Stat players will be more than

Name of the Game

Service/Phone	Monthly Rate/Games Rate Beyond Free Hours	Best Bet	Bad Deal	Gaming Grade
American Online 800-827-6364	\$9.95/month, \$2.95/hour	A variety of challenges, including the slick-looking word game <i>Strike A Match</i>	Nothing close to Air Warrior or Doom	***
CompuServe 800-858-0411	\$9.95/month, \$2.95/hour, plus \$6/hour for modem-to-modem games	Modem-to-modem gaming—but it's slow and expensive	Everything else is dated	** 1/2
Concentric Network 800-745-2747	\$29.95/month for unlimited hours or \$19.95 for 20 hours; \$1.50/hour surcharge for Ksmai games	A cheaper way to play modem-to-modem games	No original games	*** 1/2
DWANGO 713-487-0406	\$20/month for 10 hours or \$30/month for 20 hours	Deathmatches, Deathmatches, Deathmatches	If you're not a Doomhead, you're out of luck	**** 1/2
eWorld 800-775-4556	\$8.95/month, \$2.95/hour	A variety of role-playing games	No way for PC users to play	**
Genie 800-639-9636	\$9.95/month, \$3/hour, plus surcharge for prime-time access	Great-looking graphics and lots of variety, including <i>Descent</i>	Can't match the wealth of non-gaming content on the other big services	****
ImagINation Network 800-462-4461	\$9.95/month, then 2.95/hour	Games to please everyone, including <i>Football Online</i>	No Windows support yet	*** 1/2
MPG-Net 800-438-4263	\$2/hour via Internet; \$4/hour via local access number	Great games	Performance a little irregular; knocks you off unexpectedly once in a while	****
Microsoft Network 800-386-9550	\$4.95/month, \$2.50/hour	Link to MPG-Net	That's it so far	***
Prodigy 800-776-3449	\$9.95/month, \$2.95/hour	A variety of quick, satisfying challenges	Nothing new here	**

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THEM DO UNTO YOU. IN THIS CASE, RIP
OUT THEIR SPINE AND INTERNAL ORGANS.



It is the most intense fighting tournament in the universe. It is
now available on the PC. It is an exact replica of the infamous arcade
but, it has special PC encryption "codes" that unlock debilitating
powers. It has disabled sound and music identical to the coin-ops. It has
network play capabilities, which means you can go head-to-head
or foot-to-face with your all-fated friends. It is not going to be pretty.

3

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py

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impressed—no waiting and exactly the same graphics. You even get the latest NFL rule changes, a player's association license, and dozens of playbooks. Best of all, you can taunt your opponent in real time from the play-calling screen.

The only things missing are audibles and the chance to call a time-out before your play begins. Oh, and there's no action-play option. Today's online technology just won't allow you to move your players individually in real time.

Football isn't all that's new on the service. Casinoland now offers personal ads to make it easier to find an online partner. The games themselves, although fun, still stick to FGA-style gambling and Casinoland's denizens are still fond of the same ol' tired soft-porn verbal banter (the area's for adults only, requiring a password).

INN's Sierraland now has a game called *Yacht* (modeled after *Yahtzee*) that allows four simultaneous players. INN's Clubhouse has added *Team Bridge*, which is the only eight-player online version of bridge available to its great lineup of card and board games.

Coming soon: A brand-monster-spanking-new role-playing game called the *Ruins of Cawdor* is due in Medievaland. Set in the time of Macbeth and running on the Yesterbus engine, this game is designed to be heavy on teamwork. INN promises *Ruins* will have better art, a stronger storyline, and more puzzles than existing Medievaland offerings.

On the technical side, the service has had



Fantasy role-playing fans will love MPG-Net's *The Kingdom of Drakkar*.

problems getting software updates into the hands of its users. Once you get version 2.4, you'll finally be able to download changes and updates. INN's other hitch is lack of Windows compatibility—it's still DOS-only. The company is promising full Windows and Windows 95 compatibility by summer '96.

MPG-Net

Talk about your terrific games-only online secret! Actually it can't be that big a secret, since it has enjoyed 800 percent growth in the past two years, now claiming more than 10,000 members. Accessible via the Internet or the Microsoft Network (the same games on a different server), MPG-Net offers solid multiplayer games in just about every category, all sporting high-quality graphics and sounds. As a separate service, it's DOS-only for the time being (a stand-alone Windows 95 version is due by the end of the year; in the meantime, Windows 95 users can log on via the Microsoft Network). This one's good and warrants your attention. Our only complaint: The system is glitchy at times, kicking you off for no apparent reason.

You need special software to get connected. Call and order it from MPG-Net or—if you can spare your PC for a while—download it in a few hours via FTP from mpgn.com. Once you're logged in, you can choose Fantasy Games, Board Games, War Games, and Space Games.

The fantasy section contains very fine role-playing games like *The Kingdom of Drakkar* and *Fietquest*. *Drakkar* is the most popular (it's very current and a proper fantasy role-playing game), with up to 100 people simultaneously playing it individually or as part of a party working together. For people who like to play in the MUD (text-based multi-user dungeons), MUD II is the sequel to *British Legends*, a classic that

is still popular on CompuServe after 12 years. Up to 50 players roam *The Land* (an above-and-below-ground adventure region), trying to gain wizard and witch powers. There's a short learning curve and easy help for new users, but *Drakkar* is also long on continuing strategy.

Board games currently available on MPG-Net include a big railroad sim called *Empire Builder*. In the game, one to six players design and run their own railroads and try to amass wealth à la Monopoly. You can also dig into a cutting-edge futuristic game called *Minion Hunter*, which is based on the *Dark Conspiracy* role-playing game. Here, you and as many as four other players take on four computer opponents. As a minion hunter, you blend supernatural detective and mercenary to find and foil alien plots to destroy the world. That's not all: *Junta* challenges you and up to five other players to loot the treasury of a banana republic. Family parlor and card games will soon round out the list for shorter and more easily accessible fun.

War gamers will like *Operation Market Garden* (an adaptation of the Game Designers Workshop WW2 board game), in which you and an opposing general fight the largest airborne operation in history. Or you can try *Warlords of the Apocalypse*, a *Road Warrior*-style post-apocalyptic battle in a strategy/adventure setting.

Four outer space games will round out MPG-Net's offerings. The first available, *Imperium*, is an interstellar war game in which you build fleets and supply-lines and then do battle. Coming soon: *Starweb*, a graphic front-end version of the classic *Flying Buffalo* play-by-mail game.

There's lots more in the works for 1996: *Planet Net* is a graphical MUD that will even allow you to design your own graphic areas; *Fantasy Baseball* won't have real players but will have management galore; *Skulls, Bones and Buccaneers* is a pirate game still early in development; and *Citadel* will cast you as a netrunner trying to break into data fortresses in 3-D cyberspace.

Concentric Network

This network has been around since 1991 and was formerly known as the CRIS network. Concentric lets you do two things: Hook up with other gamers to play modern-to-modern

The Game's the Thing

MANY ONLINE GAMES are available on more than one service. *Air Warrior* from Kesmai is considered the graphical flight-battle game and can be found on GEnie and the Concentric Network, as well as on the current incarnation of Delphi (although that may change because the service is getting a major overhaul). Likewise, *The Dragon's Tale* from Vor Technologies, a *Betrayer* at Krondor-style RPG, and *Federation* can be accessed via the Kesmai Arles system on GEnie, Concentric Network, and Delphi. And NTN Trivia offers quick trivia contests via Prodigy, INN, CompuServe, and America Online.

—RR

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games (Command HQ is a popular choice) via its Game Connection, and hook up to game-related BBSs and online games through its BBS Direct program. (For more details on BBS Direct see Sharp Edge, November 1995, page 13.)

You connect to Con-centric through some 235 local-access numbers across North America. At around \$30 bucks a month for unlimited modem-to-modem access, The Game Connection is a good deal. But if you're more interested in playing Kismet titles, the additional charges will quickly add up.

America Online

America Online (AOL), now the world's largest online service with more than 3.5 million subscribers, hopes to lure gamers with the launch of its new Games Channel. Integrating its older games and quickly adding lots of new titles, this channel is AOL's answer to the fast-moving gaming-only services.

Get to the new games and game-related areas by selecting Keyword: Games. With everything from sports to game shows, the Games Channel also gives you a variety of games forums files to download and more. It's friendly, easily accessible content for just about everyone.

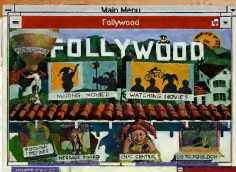
The best new offering on AOL is Boxer-Jam's word-association matching game, Strike A Match, which you can play solo or against up to two other players. Developed by Julian Griffin, the genius behind *Jeopardy!*, it raises the stakes with incredible 3-D graphics, a clean high-tech look, and lots of sounds.

But many of AOL's new titles don't fit conventional game categories. Lasting 8 to 10 weeks, they seem targeted at people who don't generally play online games. These question-based e-mail games from Yoyodyne Entertainment are still fun, though. Prove your knowledge—and win big prizes—in *You're Not Smart Enough*, *Writer's Block*, *Dialtone*, *Down For The Count*, or the celebrity-scandal game *Out of the Frying Pan*. You're competing against anywhere from 5,000 to 500,000 folks, and scoreboards keep track of your position. Enrolling in the games is as easy as sending an e-mail to

gamechannel@yoyo.com.

Similarly, Inspector Forsooth's Sunday Mystery Nights and Daily Mysteries are real-time clue-collecting games that offer a new murder mystery to solve each day. You work alone, against the clock, and against other AOL modem detectives. So far, as many as 450 people have played at once, posting answers to message boards. You'll need to bring your synapses to the party on this one.

If you "don't need no stinking graphics" to enjoy a multiplayer game, try the newest version of Federation. The mother of multiplayer titles, Federation has been around in various incarnations since it debuted on a British service for Commodore computers in the early '80s. Hundreds of AOL subscribers



Follywood from Foolish Games is a strange and wonderful place on AOL.

simultaneously join in this adult-targeted text-based blast, which has just about everything the power-hungry could want: the opportunity to garner vast wealth through interstellar trading, space battles, huge puzzles, politics, sexual innuendo, the chance to eavesdrop on other players, and if you get good enough, the joys of adding

your own planet and puzzles to the universe. Graphics be damned—this game's addicting.

You can find tons of other multiplayer experiences on AOL's alphabetical listings on the Gaming Channel, including some that push the envelope of what is



Enjoy ghost racing in CompuServe's 3-D WorldsAway.

considered gaming—Foolish Games' unusual e-mail betting games, for instance. You can also link to popular Web games by clicking on Get Caught in the Web (try net-classics like NetHack, <http://www.cs.cmu.edu/arf/andrew/org/kgb/www/zarf/games.html>), join in dated-but-worthy games like Advanced Dungeons & Dragon's Neverwinter Nights, and be the manager of your dreams in Grandstand Fantasy Sports Leagues.

CompuServe

CompuServe has been around since 1979 and is still the best and biggest service for gaming forums—yet many of its games are still text-based. These guys owned the whole online multiplayer gaming industry in the early '80s, and then virtually abandoned it. Up till very recently CompuServe's focus has been business and consumer services, while games have been a tertiary consideration. No longer. CompuServe has the money, it has the will, and soon it'll offer the way—finally.

Major signs of progress include technological marvels like CompuServe's WorldsAway, an animated chat area with avatars (see Sharp Edge, May 1995, page 16) that may hold promise for full-fledged competitive environments. Currently, though, WorldsAway offers little more than member-run scavenger hunts, trivia contests, dance competitions, comedy contests, a *Let's Make a Deal*-style game, poker tournaments, board games, and races. In the meantime,

Will TEN Be A ten?

DUE BY CHRISTMAS, the Total Entertainment Network (TEN) will initially feature multiplayer versions of Maxis's *SimCity* and the beautiful *Duke Nukem 3D* from Apogee Software. TEN has also announced a deal withSSI to bring its multiplayer RPGs to the service. Initially, TEN's software will work only on Windows 95 PCs, but a Mac version is in the works. (TEN; 415-495-0743) —RR



Duke Nukem 3D Deathmatch-style contests are coming soon to your PC.



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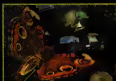
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and gritty atmosphere.



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ENTERTAINMENT



NEWS FROM THE ZONE

M2 Accelerator Is Coming!
It's a mega adapter that'll supercharge your Panasonic REAL™ 3DO System into a 64-bit monster. And check this out! You can still play your 32-bit library!

Hot New Titles!
Mortal Kombat 3 is coming in April! Updated with new locations, characters and carnage. And it's new for 3DO - exclusively from Panasonic.

GOOOOOOAAALLL!!
Olympic Soccer Scores Big! Pick a country and battle the best for the gold. First in a series of Olympic titles coming soon. Olympic Basketball and Olympic Games Volumes I and II are also on their way!



Panasonic
Software Company

type "go games" and check out CompuServe's current stable of more than 30 dated-but-still-interesting games.

For a little multiplayer action with the game of your choice, check out CompuServe's MTM area, which is intended to let you use the service to play the most current games (Virtual Pool and Mech-Warrior 2, for example) on a modem-to-modem basis. Right now, though, MTM is limited to prohibitively slow 2,400-baud speeds and is metered at a whopping \$6 an hour. Expect major changes in access speed and pricing soon.

Other CompuServe plans include a blockbuster head-to-head reality-based role-playing game that will deliver geo-political intrigue and puzzles in a high-tech graphical environment.

Genie

With its relatively small subscriber base of some 75,000 members, Genie isn't in the same league as AOL, CompuServe, Prodigy, and MSN. But it beats out the major players with its high-quality, real-time multiplayer contests. All of its more than 30 games feature high-res graphics, hundreds of players at once, and top-notch sound. You play these games via a new Windows front-end that you install on your system from a free membership CD-ROM.

For Mac Gamers Only

Apple's eWorld is currently a Mac-only service, so that fact right there cuts out the majority of gamers. However, a Windows version of the software is expected by the end of the year. In the meantime Mac gamers can play a handful of multiplayer games in the Arts & Leisure Pavilion, including several role-playing games in the Electric Adventurer forum. You'll also find quick games from Yoyodyne, but currently the new games available on AOL (You're Not Smart Enough, etc.) can't be played here yet.

—Christine Grech



Prodigy's Madmaze may be old, but it's still solid.

Add a recent price cut for connect time and some major new titles, and Genie becomes a strong online gaming contender.

The biggest gaming news at Genie is an upcoming version of Interplay's Descent that adds new levels, hovercraft, weaponry, full tournaments, and a new level every week. Expect to see it online by Christmas.

Other games in development include Interactive Broadcasting's Armored Assault—a multiplayer tank polygon-battle game—and Spectrum HoloByte's officially licensed version of Magic the Gathering.

Genie's most popular existing games include Kesmai's Air Warrior, which pits you against other pilots in a vast multiplayer battle for ownership of the skies (for other places to play this classic, see "The Game's the Thing," page 97). Other popular contests include robocn showdowns in Battletech and Cyberstrike; Simutronics's text-based crime adventure Modus Operandi (for a full review see September 1995, page 74); and the classic RPG GemStone.

Prodigy

Like CompuServe, much of Prodigy's game action seems a bit dated. Over the past few years, millions of players have enjoyed the weekly trivia games Guts and Frantic Guts. Other choices include Rebel Space, an aging science-fiction game; Madmaze, an outmoded but fun graphical adventure that offers linear maze-crawls; and bunches of quick/small games that deal in everything from words to humor—like NTN Trivia. To get there jump: Games Central.

Prodigy claims that multiplayer gaming from the big developers is a top priority and that big announcements are in the works. We'll keep you posted.



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Location, Location, Location—

Virtual reality and Friday nights make a great combination—and we're not talking about the ill-fated, out-of-touch VR.5 TV series. Nope, this is the real thing, and it's a much better way to kick off the weekend than sitting in front of the tube, or even in front of your computer wearing one of those big-ticket home-VR headsets that turn Doom II into a sort-of-3-D spectacle.

"Location-based virtual reality" is a fancy term for describing what's really a state-of-the-art arcade. You've probably already visited (or at least heard of) VR

Play exciting games, grab a cocktail, and make friends at the newest virtual-reality hot spots. There's one near you!

chains like Virtual World and CyberMind, which pioneered the phenomena by letting patrons don VR gear and play games against real people. The popularity of these attractions has resulted in the birth of an entirely new industry. (For a look back at early VR offerings, see "Sweaty Palms," January 1994, page 42.)

While you can find VR pods stashed in the back of arcades across the country, the new virtual-reality Meccas are strictly for grown-ups. Many offer other amenities that make them perfect for a night on the town: full-service bars and restaurants; lower-tech activities like pool, movies, and video games; and the atmosphere of a trendy watering hole. In fact, many of these new sites are actually the first outlets of planned national franchises.

Like the so-called "digital cafes," popping up around the country to offer espresso and Internet access, each of the new virtual-reality night spots has its own personality and individual take on VR. Some make virtual reality the star of the show, while others incorporate the technology into an overall entertainment scene. Either way, it's competitive, fun, and affordable.

To help you get in on the action, we've got the lowdown on the three hottest new VR spots for grown-ups: Block Party, Dave & Buster's, and UA Starport, as well as what's new at old standbys CyberMind and Virtual World. Plus, you'll also find out about even more exciting VR centers and rides that are in the works.

By Christine Grech

Block Party

Albuquerque, 505-875-0603; Indianapolis, 317-578-7941



Blockbuster Entertainment—the movie-rental people—are hoping you don't spend all of your evenings with a video and some popcorn. The company's newest entertainment foray is Block Party, a massive indoor entertainment complex for adults—kids younger than 16 must be accompanied by a parent—that features five main attractions, including two VR areas. In fact, Blockbuster, which is currently testing the Block Party concept in Albuquerque and Indianapolis, even gives members an incentive to get out of the house with discounts for Blockbuster Video-card holders.

Block Party is about half high-tech fun and half more traditional fare. Its Virtua Alley houses two sets of Virtuality pods that currently let you play VR classics *Zone Hunter*, a cooperative shooter in which you try to blast aliens, and the competitive *Dactyl Nightmare*, in which you try to stay out of the Dactyl's way and collect dinosaur eggs before your opponent can. (For new Virtuality games likely to show up at Block Party soon, see "Along for the Ride," page 105.) While not on the cutting edge, for around \$3 a pop these games are an inexpensive way to get in on the VR fun.

A unique (though not interactive) experience can be had in Go Motion Pictures, a motion theater created by VR developer I!Werks. This 18-seat movie theater has specially wired seats that move along with

five-minute movies to create a big-screen VR experience. Block Party plays six different films each hour, including *The Rottler*, a roller coaster simulation, and *Dino Island*, an animated, Jurassic Park-style exploration.

You get to Virtua Alley and Go Motion Pictures from Block Party's "Main Street" area; from there you can also check out the Power Grid, a climbing structure for big kids, complete with plastic balls and slides; Flippers, a video arcade; and Soup 'er Bloopers, a sports cafe. There's also a newsstand, a store, and a party room. You pay for everything, except

food and drinks, with a "Funcard," a prepaid credit card that you purchase when you enter Block Party. For every

Standard arcade games are the only fun at Block Party.

\$20 credit you buy, Block Party kicks in an extra \$3, and Blockbuster members get an additional \$3 credit.

With Block Party's layout, ambient sound effects, bright lights, and whimsical decor, the place feels kind of like an indoor Disneyland. Blockbuster plans to expand the Block Party concept across the country soon.

This ain't no ordinary Main Street.



Experience Dactyl Nightmare at Virtua Alley.



Location.

Dave & Buster's

Atlanta, 404-951-5554; Dallas, 214-350-0941, 214-361-5553;
Houston, 713-952-2233; Philadelphia, 215-413-1951



Dave & Buster's takes the same approach as Block Party—an adult playland that mixes virtual-reality attractions with other grown-up games, only much bigger. The original Dave & Buster's in Dallas sprawls some 40,000 square feet, while the company's flagship location on the Philadelphia waterfront covers a whopping 70,000 square feet (an estimated 6,000 to 8,000 people make the place hop on weekend nights).

All that space leaves room for lots of different entertainment, including virtual reality. D&B's Million Dollar Midway offers Virtuality classics like Dactyl Nightmare and Namco's venerable Galaxian theater, in which you and five other gunners play a space-combat game on a 15-foot screen. Or take a swing at The 19th Hole, a golf simulator where you swing real clubs to hit real balls against a huge screen.

But the biggest VR push is found at the Atlanta and Houston locations, where D&B has a full-fledged Virtual World Outpost. As at other Virtual World locations, you can play BattleTech and Red Planet. There's also Virtual World's familiar Explorer's Bar, where you can hang out before and after matches.

Dave & Buster's also features other restaurants and bars, bowling, "for-fun" gambling, billiards, a slew of video, pinball, and carnival games, and lots more. Kids younger than 21 must be accompanied by a parent, and after 10 p.m., no kids are allowed—period. Look for two brand new Dave & Buster's locations in Chicago soon, with the company adding two to three new sites annually.



Dave Hunter is one of many grown-up games at Dave & Buster's.



On the Million Dollar Midway, play classic Virtuality games.

Dave & Buster's is an adult playland.



Look how quickly you play golf—without leaving home.

ation, Location—
R!

UA Starport

Dallas, 214-691-0049; Indianapolis, 317-237-6498

United Artists Starport is another big name getting into the virtual-reality game. The UA Starport combines a traditional movie theater and virtual-reality center. The first Starport location in Dallas added a Virtual World Outpost to an existing eight-plex, and topped it all off with a Showscan motion theater, VR gliders, and a sprinkling of Virtuality machines. A branch of the nationally franchised laser-tag center Ozar is conveniently located next door.

Look for Virtual World's new Voyage to Atlantis at UA Starport next year.

UA's second Starport, in Indianapolis, has an even larger movie theater and a full food court. There are no age restrictions, so expect to see lots of kids and teens mixing with the adults.

United Artists is using its first two Starports to test various combination of attractions. Once it comes up with the optimum mix, expect to see Starports popping up all over the country.



CyberMind

14 worldwide locations; 800-492-9237

CyberMind and Virtual World centers were the first places where big kids could go to try out location-based VR. Both chains are adding new locations and new games, and CyberMind's flagship San Francisco location recently added a Virtual World Outpost.

CyberMind, now up to 14 locations, has also added a new VR system from Greystone Technologies called the Andromeda. This sit-down pod, powered by a Silicon Graphics Onyx Reality Engine² instead of a 486 PC or Pentium like Virtuality and Virtual World attractions use, doesn't currently have a head-mounted display or tracking device, instead showing the action on a standard flat screen. The first Andromeda game is MagBall, a futuristic ice-hockey game in which you control a magnetic hovercraft. Teams of up to three players try to attract the puck and score goals. Unlike other current VR games, MagBall offers non-violent fun—no shooting required.

Greystone is also working on other new VR platforms and games. The cool Mercury platform looks like a combination jet-ski/motorcycle. You'll sit on it to play Canyon Runner, a six-person racing game.



Greystone's Mercury platform will be coming to a VR center near you.

Location, Location, Location



Along for The Ride

Dedicated virtual-reality centers aren't the only place to play VR games. Many arcades and amusement parks now sport virtual-reality attractions.

Virtuality is updating its fun but aging Dactyl Nightmare and Zone Hunter games with the four-player Dactyl Nightmare 2: Race for the Eggs. The new version adds more chambers to search, variable skill levels, and bonus eggs.

You can also try your hand at Buggy Ball in Virtuality's sit-down pods. The four-player game is a cross between volleyball and racing, in which you must drive a vehicle—dune buggy, 4x4, police car, or bulldozer—and move a giant beach ball to score goals.

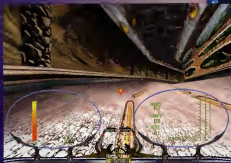
But perhaps the most innovative new virtual-reality attractions turn VR conventions on their ear. No helmets, no hand-held controllers, no sit-down pods. Veda's multi-million dollar **Chameleon**, which also uses an Onyx Reality Engine² to generate graphics, encloses you and a buddy in a pod that's more like

a high-tech carnival ride (think Octopus with enclosed seats). An outdoor ride in its first U.S. installation at Six Flags in Arlington, Virginia, Chameleon comprises a central hub and six arms, each with a two-person pod on the end. Each moving pod makes up a team for Labyrinth Rangers, a futuristic flight sim and shooter where you take turns with your teammate flying and shooting your way through alien mines or mazes. —CG

Chameleon is powered by an SGI—not a PC.



MagBall scores a goal at CyberMind.



Maneuver minds in Chameleon's Labyrinth Rangers.



Go for a spin in Virtuality's Buggy Ball.

Location, Location, Location— VR!

Virtual World

22 worldwide locations, 213-663-9496

Virtual World's 26 worldwide centers are bolstering their BattleTech and Red Planet offerings with Voyage to Atlantis (due next year). You and seven companions pilot a virtual submarine and explore the ruins of the mythic city. Things get lively when an undersea volcano erupts and you must work together to save a trapped submarine. Voyage to Atlantis will debut on the company's existing platform, but will then be available on the next-generation Tesla System—with more realistic sights and sounds, along with additional controls.



Voyage to Atlantis in Virtual World's new Tesla pod.

Virtually Here

In virtual reality, the state of the art is a moving target. In the next year, you can look forward to several brand-new VR sites, including this hot spot for grownups.

Due by the beginning of 1996, **CyberDiner** is an eatery/VR-attraction blending 1950s diner with 1990s technology. It's the brainchild of developer Virtual Images, which makes VR hardware and games.

Housed in a spaceship structure complete with a robotic doorman, CyberDiner will have a feel right from The Jetsons. Once at your table, you'll be able to order menu items via the touch-screen monitor in your table top. If you're not hungry, grab a seat at the funky bar and have a drink—or play a game.

CyberDiner will offer the latest Virtual Images attractions (also coming soon to arcades and amusement parks around the country), including CyberDome, a futuristic 4-player Capture the Flag that you play on stand-up systems. Or try CyberBuggy, a driving game for a pair of players. (Virtual Images; 614-799-1100)

Meanwhile, the first **Virtropolis**, located in the famed Glendale Galleria (remember "Valley Girl"?), in LA's San Fernando Valley, will combine Virtuality games with refreshments and VR-related merchandise. The company also hopes to add original VR games to the mix in the future. The Glendale site debuted this year, with others to follow across the country. (Virtropolis; 800-492-8177)

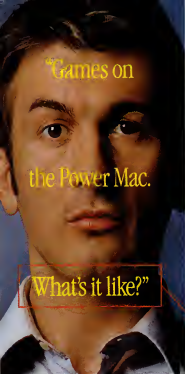


tion, Location—
R!



Look for a Virtropolis at a mall near you.

CyberDiner will let you play the latest VR games from Virtual Images.



Games on

the Power Mac.

What's it like?"

You're standing over a 20-foot putt, and as an expectant hush falls over the crowd this huge 8-foot-tall guy with bionic arms walks out onto the green and does this like, windmill kick that shatters your jaw in 3 or 7 places and you're running low on lives so you jump in your T-80 tank and do 65 mph heading for the trees (slowing to 55 for the sand traps) wasting spectators and oops your caddie along the way and you're racking up the points and feeling pretty good when all of a sudden you hear this beep-beep-beep-beep alarm go off and you've got a bogey on your tail so you drop some chaff and try some evasive maneuvers but to no avail and this explosion rocks you hard and both engines are out so you hit the eject button and suddenly you're floating and down below you see these trees start to materialize and your caddie, somehow miraculously back alive, says "bogey" and you look up but he just means you missed the putt and you missed it bad.

It's sort of like that, but with more colors. And faster.



The RISC chip endows the Power Macintosh[®] 5500/5500 (SE) with processing speeds up to four times faster than your average PC*, resulting in unparalleled speed, smoother action, way-cool graphics—all without "dip" switches or goofy key commands. Myth-Exploder Statement #2: there are plenty o' killer games to choose from, and more coming every day. To find out what else you could do if this power were in your hands, check out our web site: www.apple.com/games/. You, a Mac, the world.

*When comparing a Power Macintosh 5500/5500 (SE) to a 60 MHz 486 PC, according to a study by Computer Research Services, July 1995. © 1995 Apple Computer Inc. All rights reserved. Apple, the Apple logo, Macintosh and Power Macintosh are registered trademarks of Apple Computer Inc. Mac, Power Mac and You a Mac, the world are trademarks of Apple Computer Inc. All other product names are trademarks of their respective companies. All Macintosh computers are designed to be accessible to students with disabilities. To learn more (U.S. only), call 800-536-7888 or 177-480-7535 (CAN).



What's bugging you? Life as a cockroach

Bad

too tough? These tips will keep you crawling

along in the dark new adventure that lowers

graphic realism to a disgusting new level.

Mojo

GUIDED TOUR



Essentially, "bad mojo" means a terrible, powerful magic. As the title of Pulse Entertainment's latest game, *Bad Mojo* is perhaps the understatement of the year. In this deeply macabre, yet refreshingly unique adventure game, you become one of the most disgusting life forms on the planet—a cockroach.

You play the part of Dr. Roger Samms, a rather disturbed young man who is transformed into a cockroach by a mysterious, ancient locket. The entire game takes place in a defunct watering hole on the San Francisco waterfront called Eddie's Bar. (Literary types beware: While *Bad Mojo* may reprise the cockroach transformation from Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, that's where the similarity ends.)

With few initial clues, you must unravel the mystery of your tortured past by exploring the bar and observing its inhabitants from your new floor-hugging perspective. Puzzles range from safely navigating a roach trap to figuring out how to kill a rat that wants you for dinner. You can die up to three times per screen—then you're sent back to the beginning.

You view *Bad Mojo*'s world mostly from a top-down perspective. Video segments that provide clues and advance the game's story are interspersed throughout its 780 navigable, 3-D-rendered screens.

One warning: If you're cursed with a squeamish stomach, *Bad Mojo* is probably not for you. A roach's world is by no means pretty. You'll be surrounded by dead rats, mutilated catfish, spiders, squashed insects, roach traps, and cigarette butts—all rendered in superb, photorealistic detail.

And you'd never guess that being a roach could be so much fun. You can do just about anything a roach can do: crawl over, under, and through objects; manipulate small items with your armored noggin; climb walls like Spider-Man; and even interact with the odd bug, mouse, and slug you encounter in your travels.

With its detailed graphics, superb sound, and unraveling mystery, *Bad Mojo* may be similar in scope to *Myst*, but it's safe to say there's never been a game experience quite like it. So scurry aboard our Guided Tour for hints and tips on how to stay out of Raid's way and get through the basement, Eddie's bedroom, and the restroom—the first three of *Bad Mojo*'s six massive rooms. (Pulse Entertainment; 310-264-5579; not yet priced)

SPOILERS!

Read no further if you don't want to know how it's done!



1

The Basement

Always be on the lookout for other roaches scurrying about. Following them will often lead you in the right direction.



2

Finding this pod of roaches under the water heater should be your first goal. One of them will give you your first clue—in the form of a riddle.



3

Careful, this rat's not dead yet—and he's still hungry.



4

Getting past this spider is your first puzzle. Try using the cigarette to give the arachnid a burn he won't soon forget.

Use that tough head of yours, and that egg casing, to bridge that sticky gap between you and freedom.



5

Once you navigate the puddles of toxic chemicals on the shelf (there's a short cut near the paintbrush handle); use this paint stirrer to make your way to the power meters.



6



7

You'll still need to work your way through the garbage can to uncover some useful clues and find a path to the shelf above.

This is the power cord to the vacuum cleaner on the table above. You've got to turn it off to avoid getting either sucked into the garbage or blown across the room.



8

The Bedroom

Remember this fuse box. It will play a vital role near the end of the game. Then walk down the mop handle to get to the floor, and follow the door jamb (watch out for the cat) to Eddie's bed.



That outlet is the doorway to the restroom; use the cigar box to gain access to it.



Search the walls around Eddie's bed for a slime trail, which leads to this slug and another video clue.



Finding the stack of papers by Eddie's bed will provide you with some more clues to your past.

The old song will make Eddie nostalgic and he'll put his beer down by the radio. Use your head to knock a pill out of the bottle on top of the radio, and then slip Eddie a mickey.



Finding a way to set the mouse free inside this trap is well worth your time and effort.



The radio is very important, but you must find a way to fix it. First, find a way inside and then apply a strategy similar to that used for the vacuum puzzle.

Next, crawl to the top of the newspapers and use this timeless classic to get to the table above. Now start looking for the radio.





The Restroom

Get stuck in the wet paint in the restroom and you're history. Create a bridge to the floor by crawling into the paper towel dispenser and moving that lever.

17



Don't push that cigarette off the urinal yet—you'll need it late in the game. This is also a good vantage point for seeing what else is in the room.



18

19



Climb over the body of the rat to get to the exit. Beyond lies the bar itself. Good luck!

22



21



You'll need to get by the hungry rat lying in ambush beyond that door. A direct approach won't work.

Hmmm. Razor blades can be dangerous if used incorrectly.

20



The medicine cabinet holds the cure to your rodent troubles.



AMERICA'S LARGEST KILLER OF TIME™

ZOOP® - IF YOU START YOU MAY NEVER STOP

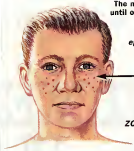


(Dream cycle of a normal and healthy teen)

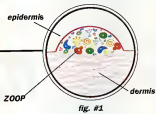


(Dream cycle of a teen who plays ZOOP®)

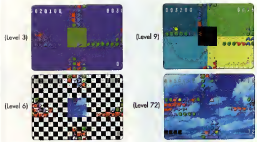
Warning! ZOOP looks and plays like an innocent game, but extensive play may cause the following symptoms: loss of friends, loss of appetite, insomnia and excessive battery consumption. Whenever possible, avoid play.



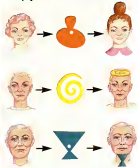
The mental anguish of playing ZOOP grows until one day it manifests itself on your face.



THE DEPTHS OF ZOOP



Research has shown the longer you play ZOOP®, the more you actually start taking on the physical characteristics of ZOOP®.



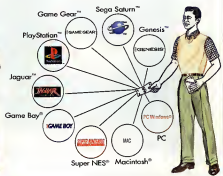
(Prolonged psychological effects are still under study.)

MONEY SPENDING PATTERNS.

before ZOOP:



after ZOOP:



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DON'T JUST DODGE ROCKETS,

DANCE WITH THEM,

SING A SONG TO THEM,

THEN

TATTOO

YOUR

ON THEIR

**NICKEL
PLA**



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Every minuscule move you make is
transmitted quickly down the line of fire.

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And this is one joystick that never begs for mercy,
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Bullets curse when they miss, listen.
It's a phenomenon known only by those who choose
a joystick that needs no re-calibration
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This is the jet black void of the gaming experience.

This is the Sidewinder 3D Pro joystick, compatible
with all MS-DOS®-based and Windows® 95-based games,
the elder of the Sidewinder joystick family.

All the dexterity of a gaming demigod is yours to
call upon, and with one finger you vent retribution
on every shiny dark destructive heart.

INITIALS

TED
SKULLS.



Confirmed Kill Hits Some Turbulence



Graphic Simulations' Hornet 2.0 graphics engine graces ICI's new Confirmed Kill.

If you have braved the online flight sim Confirmed Kill (CK), you know it features the fiercest dogfights around. But compared to recent political infighting between the game's creators—ICI and Domark—CK looks more like United's friendly skies.

ICI, designer of the original CK's flight model and online component, severed its ties with Domark, which supplied the graphics engine and name, in late September—two months before ICI was to release the commercial version of CK. Around the same time, ICI enlisted Graphic Simulations and its Hornet 2.0 engine for a new front end.

So what does this mess mean to game players? According to ICI, the new version is slated to be up and running on the Concentric gaming network and commercially available through the Internet this month. Other than being slightly

faster and featuring sharper graphics, ICI says it will be essentially the same product. Finally, Graphic Simulations will also release a boxed single-player version of the game.

Meanwhile, Domark says it will release its own online version—still called Confirmed Kill—with a different flight model in the near future as well as its originally planned single-player boxed version.

Why the breakup? ICI says it felt frustrated by what it called a lack of cooperation from its partner. Updated graphics were not sent in a timely manner, and ICI was not happy with the quality of the artwork when it did arrive, says Robert Salinas, ICI's vice president of sales and marketing. In addition, the company felt pressured to accept an offer by Domark to buy them out.

However, most of all, the company says Domark took unreasonable credit for CK's creation. ICI's president, Dale Addink, wrote CK's force-based flight model and the source code that makes game play possible online. However, Domark, specifically Bryan Walker, has been cited as the developer and designer of CK in many magazines.

"Basically, we were sick of not being acknowledged and felt Domark was doing their best to hide us in an effort to make themselves look better," says Salinas.

Domark refused comment at press time, issuing only a short statement that said: "Domark does not agree with ICI's assertions and is disappointed that they did not see fit to approach us directly with their reservations before terminating our contract."

Who knows, there may be a silver lining in the Confirmed Kill debacle for game players. Instead of two online flight sims to choose from, CK and Air Warrior, now there will be three.

—Steve Klett

Scouting Report

Game News You Can Use

Gamers eager to see what Windows 95 can really do can get a taste of the future right now on Microsoft's low-priced Windows 95 game sampler. Included is at least one playable level from several upcoming native Windows 95 games from companies such as 7th Level (Battle Beast), Accolade, Bullfrog, Electronic Arts, Id Software, LucasArts, Papyrus (IndyCar Racing 2), Reality Bytes, and Trimark Interactive (The Hive).

Heads up, MechWarrior 2 fanatics: Activision is releasing a free multiplayer game patch called **NetMech** over the Internet. It will support eight-player matches over any local-area network, as well as one-on-one grudge matches via modem. Also in the works is the **Clan Ghost Bear Add-On Package**, featuring at least 10 new Mechs,

as well as several new missions, weapons, and underwater and snow-covered terrain. Finally, a Windows 95 version of MechWarrior 2 will ship by the end of the year. Check out U.S. Gold's **ShellShock**, a first-



Activision's free NetMech multiplayer game patch allows eight-player duels over a local area network.

person, action-oriented tank experience available now for DOS, as well as the PlayStation and Saturn. As part of a ragtag group of commandos called Da Wardenz, you must stabilize 25 politically volatile regions

in an M-13 Predator Battletank. Beyond fully texture-mapped environments, elaborate cut scenes, and multiplayer support for the PC version, fullback William Floyd of the San Francisco 49ers provides the gritty rap soundtrack.

Spectrum HoloByte will kick off its new "World Circuit Racing" line based on the FIA Formula One license with **Grand Prix II** for DOS. In addition to slick graphics, it will feature all 16 circuits from the 1994 Formula One racing season. The strategy game **Grand Prix Manager** will follow. This time, you step out of the pit and into the world of motor sports management—responsible for attracting sponsors and calling the shots trackside. Finally, the holidays will mark the launch of Spectrum's "Classic Series" and "Players Choice" brands, which consist of re-releases of previous titles, such as X-COM: Terror From the

Need A Hand?

Cannon Fodder

To skip a level: Select map screen, press **Ctrl**, type **fodder**. Look for white screen border, wait for border to disappear, exit map screen, press **Enter**.

Colonization

Cheat Menu: Press **Alt** and type **win** during play.

Descent

During play, type **gabbagabbahey** and the following codes:
bigred: All weapons
brin: Free life
buggins: speed boost

Full Throttle

To win fights on the Old Mine Road: Press left **Shift** and type **v**.

Magic Carpet 2

During play, type **I** and **windy**, and press:

Alt-F1: All spells
Alt-F2: More Mana
Alt-F3: Destroy other players
Alt-F4: Destroy other castles
Alt-F5: Destroy other balloons
Alt-F6: Full health
Alt-F7: Kill all creatures
Alt-F8: Next experience level
Alt-F9: Free spell
Alt-F10: Invincibility

Master of Magic

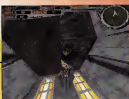
To boost wizard power: Press **Alt**, type **pur** at Magic screen (boosts enemy wizards as well).

To receive full world map: Press **Alt** and type **rvf**.

Outpost

During play, press **Alt**, type **win**, and press:

Ctrl-F8: Get some encouragement
Ctrl-F9: Cause a traffic pileup
Ctrl-F10: Disaster strikes



You'll be unstoppable with these Terminal Velocity cheat codes.

Ctrl-F11: Beaucoup resources

Ctrl-F12: Increase/decrease morale, education, or crime

SimTower

To double your money: Do not build, scroll underground and all the way left, click on lobby icon, place lobby in left-hand corner of basement.

Slipstream 5000

To receive unlimited funds: Type **refinery** at the main menu screen.

Superkarts

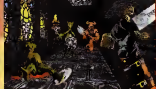
To select any track: Type **oriel** at the Go Karting screen.

For \$10,000: Type **brasnose** in the shop.
For unlimited turbos: Type **maric-martin** during a race.

Syndicate

Type the following codes as the company name:

rob a bank: \$100 million
muk them: All countries available to the top: \$100 million all countries
cooper team: \$100 million all countries, and all weapons



All of WitchHaven's weapons, spells, and potions at your fingertips.

Terminal Velocity

During play, type:

trigods: Invincibility
3drealms: Restore weapons
trishid: Restore shield
tribum: Increase afterburner
maniacs: 1,000 afterburner units
trinx: Warp to next level
trif1 to **trif7**: Extra ammo

Theme Park

For \$15,000: Type **horza** as your nickname and press **Ctrl-C**.

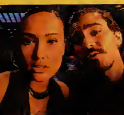
To upgrade your park: Press **Shift-Z** for trees and bathrooms, **Ctrl-Z** for shops, and **Alt-Z** for rides.

Wing Commander III

Battle Chest: Launch the game with **wc3 -mitchell**, enter a battle, and press **Ctrl-w** to destroy any targeted ship. To destroy all ships on radar, press **Ctrl-Alt-w**.

WitchHaven

During play, press **backspace**, type the following codes, and press enter:
scooter: All weapons
wango: Full health, armor
mommy: All potions, spells



Having trouble? These Daedalus Encounter scene and puzzle skips will get you going.

Daedalus Encounter

To skip a scene: Select Game from main menu, press **Alt-F5**, select **Jump** to reveal saved games for all scenes.

To skip a puzzle: Press **Alt-Shift**, type the first letter of the puzzle's name. (Press **Alt-Shift-I** to skip the orbit puzzle.)

Deep, for Windows from \$14.99 to \$32.99.

Groler Electronic Publishing continues its march into the game market this month with the full-screen, full-motion-video title **Terror TRAX**, in which you track down futuristic vampires, and the sharp-looking golf simulation **Greg Norman: Ultimate Challenge Golf**.

Golfers should also keep an eye out for **Nick Faldo's Championship Golf Challenge** on DOS CD-ROM from Art Data Interactive, which includes eight computer opponents, several 18-hole courses, and a comprehensive coach section featuring Faldo himself. Also, Art Data Interactive adds drama to standard chess in **Chess Wars**. Leaving nothing to the imagination, full-motion-video segments display every move and battle.

Domark will be one of several game companies supporting the 3-D **Vérité** game chip from hardware maker Rendition on Number Nine



Domark's upcoming space shooter **Terracide**, graphically enhanced by Rendition's 3-D accelerator chip, should turn heads.

boards next year. Look for a stunning Rendition-enhanced version of Domark's space adventure **Terracide** in '96. In the meantime, Domark's DOS game **Big Red Racing** is shipping late this month with a variety of far-out vehicles and tracks as well as multiplayer capabilities. Also out now is the role-playing adventure **Curse of Dragor** for the Mac and Power Mac, featuring 15 characters (to choose from),

high-resolution 3-D graphics, and an intriguing fantasy storyline.

Interplay and Acclaim have struck an agreement to bring more fighting and sports games to the Mac. In early '96, Interplay's MacPlay division will ship Mac versions of Acclaim favorites **Mortal Kombat II** and **NBA Jam Tournament Edition**.

Responding to pressure from the Sony PlayStation, Sega has cut a hundred bucks off the price of its Sega Saturn, which is now available for \$299. A version bundled with Virtua Fighter Remix is available for \$349.

The DOS and Windows CD-ROM collection **Attack Stack** (priced between \$29.99-\$39.99) from Velocity is out now for value hunters. Onboard are The Lemmings Chronicles, Street Fighter II, Doom: Episode One, The Journeyman Project Turbo, Novastorm, and Velocity's own Spectre VR.

Crusader: No Remorse

By Anthony Lukban

"I'm unarmed!" pleads the overall-clad worker as he stares into the muzzle of my shotgun. But just moments ago he blew the whistle on me, calling in some armed guards who came to take care of the problem. Unfortunately for them, they got more of a problem than they expected. Things get personal when bullets whiz over your head.

BANG!

The luckless worker crumples to the floor in a pool of blood, and I rifle through his pockets looking for credits that I can use to buy more firepower. After all, I am the Crusader—with no remorse.

The story of Crusader: No Remorse is simple. The crim-son-clad Crusader is a former member of the Silencers, a



For a laugh, try using the rocket-launcher against guards. No remorse, right?

done, you'll want to play the game just to discover hidden gems. (For example, watch the chairs spin after nearby explosions.) Crusader's beauty is more than armor-deep, though: the game play itself is entertaining, intelligent, and extremely challenging. Yes, it's a blow-up-and-kill-everything-you-see game, but one with style and brains.

Let's start with the graphics. The game's settings are all very industrial—there are no trees to hide behind on this battleground. Each screen is filled with details that can be crucial to winning—or even surviving. You must throw small switches to open doors, and destroy or avoid cleverly hidden triggers to disable automated (and lethal) countermeasures.

Characters move incredibly smoothly, whether they're simply walking across the floor or executing an impressively evasive tuck-and-roll maneuver. Even the sounds are detailed. Ambient noises change accordingly when you walk from one area to another. Some places contain noisy fans, while others house humming laser beams. And the sound of bullets penetrating metal is music to a gamer's ears.

From a pyrotechnic point of view, the explosions are a blast. Crusader excels at blowing things apart. Unlike the vast



Multiple mechs! Pull out the heavy hardware, keep moving, and you may get lucky.

fearful military group run by a fascist government. Now he's joined the Resistance in a desperate effort to redeem himself and bring down the evil overlords.

The game itself is not so simple, however. An isometric, top-down perspective offers a breath of fresh air compared to the burgeoning legions of first-person-perspective (read: Doom-like) action games. You'll be immediately impressed with the detail. Every bit of art, sound, and action is so well

majority of games, it seems like no two Crusader explosions are the same. Even better, objects explode in a logical manner; transformers ignite with a bright white light, while computers fizzle and spark.

This surface glitz alone is enough to set new standards for action games, but how does it play?

In a word: great.

**Crusader:
No Remorse**
Origin Systems
800-245-4525

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 5MB RAM, DOS 5.0,
Sound Blaster-compatible
List Price: \$55-65

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Crusader is a terrific alternative to the flood of first-person shooters.

But this action game has plenty of adventure elements. You've got to get your brain in gear if you want to survive here. An undisciplined and unplanned approach will just get you killed or, worse, marooned with nowhere to go but back to your last saved game. Unless you play at the easiest skill level against weak opposition, blindly storming areas with guns blazing is a suicide mission.

That's because of the devilishly clever obstacles. In addition to human characters, you'll have to avoid or destroy automated security devices including cameras, lasers, force fields, and armed robots. You must constantly look

- Save often. You can get trapped if you blow up vital objects.
- Use the appropriate weapon for the job at hand. The machine gun and pistol work best for long-range targets such as cameras.
- The shotgun is devastating against robots or clustered enemies.
- Look for hidden objects behind barrels and boxes. Sometimes you have to blow them up to get what you need.
- Use your bombs wisely; the spider bomb is great for spreading destruction around corners.
- Take out all the security cameras you see before entering unknown areas.
- Be snoopy. The computer terminals have important things to tell you.
- Remember: No remorse. Kill everyone and loot the bodies.



Don't get burnt in the fire fight.



Pull out the serious hardware when things get hot. It's easy to get killed with only a pistol in your hand.

ahead for clues (like floor depressions or camera mounts) about what's coming up next. That means that playing one of the game's 15 missions can take anywhere from one to three hours, even if you know what you're doing.

You can move the Crusader around with the keyboard, but using the mouse in conjunction with certain keys is a better choice. Use the mouse to control direction, and rely on the keyboard to activate a variety of stances and actions. Essential moves include a gun-at-the-ready quick-step, crouch and fire, sidestep, and tuck-and-roll. You'll need to learn them all to dodge bullets, lasers, and other ordinance coming your way.

Crusader: No Remorse extends its atten-

tion to detail to the introduction video and cinematic cut scenes between missions. These rest stops let you interact with a number of sleazy characters, including gun dealers who sell you new weapons and spies who provide you with essential information.

But despite the trappings, this isn't really an adventure game. Soon enough, the Crusader is beamed into a new mission—and usually into an already active area. So draw that shotgun as soon as you appear, and get ready for an intensely detailed, seriously challenging, and hour-devouring good time.



With the right persuasion, everything in this room will blow up. Be careful what you blow up though—you may need it to complete your mission.

Frankenstein: Through the Eyes Of the Monster

By Ann M. Marcus

Mary Shelley's compelling 1818 story of Dr. Frankenstein and his attempt to play God has spawned some great entertainment over the years: The 1931 classic *Frankenstein* starring Boris Karloff as the Doctor; the 1943 thriller in which the monster (Bela Lugosi) meets the Wolf Man (Lon Chaney, Jr.); and *Young Frankenstein*, the hilarious 1974 spoof by Mel Brooks.

Tim Curry does caustic justice to the role first made famous by Boris Karloff.



Now Interplay puts a new twist on the tale in its stunning CD-ROM game *Frankenstein: Through the Eyes of the Monster*. This time, you are the creature—constructed of parts salvaged from other unfortunate humans. Tim Curry plays Dr. Frankenstein. Surely you'll remember him as Dr. Frank N. Furter in the 1975 cult classic *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, a kinky adaptation of Shelley's story. Here again, Curry plays the Doc with a swagger and a biting wit—but this time without the merry widow, garter belts, and lipstick. The evil, sardonic scientist-gone-mad is hell-bent on perfecting a life-giving element that will make him famous.

With the majority of your previous life's memory and consciousness still intact, you must uncover the mystery that led to your demise and resurrection, and try to come to terms with the nightmare of awakening in a body whose parts are not all your own.

When you do first awaken—to Dr. Frankenstein's great delight—he greets you with a friendly injection of morphine, which he giddily shares to celebrate your rebirth. You black out briefly, and when you awaken again—alone this time—you notice in horror that your arms don't match: your left is a woman's, your right a man's.

From there, you slip off the slab and are free—for a while anyway—to explore the Doctor's great stone castle. To get through the game



Come down to the lab...

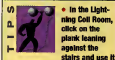
successfully, you'll need to explore and harvest an assortment of objects—a wooden beam, an axe, a crowbar, and scientific notes—from nearly 40 different locations.

Each room in the castle, its furnishings, accessories, scientific equipment, and machinery; and the surrounding grounds are all exquisitely rendered in great detail. There's even an underwater sequence in which you're attacked by a giant octopus. The secret passages, wine cellar, hedge maze, caverns, and tunnels provide ample opportunity to get seriously lost. The sound effects are terrific, and the music is compelling and changes frequently enough to stay interesting. The hand-shaped mouse cursor controls the game, pointing left, right, or forward depending on the situation's options or turning to a grasping posture over hot-spots and usable objects.

Besides the Doc, you'll encounter a few other characters from the novel, including the henchmen, Sara, Vladimig, and Gabrielle (your daughter).

However, it is the Doctor himself who remains central to the plot, and you will encounter him many times. When you do, he'll often reveal various bits of information about what happened to you and what nefarious plans he has in mind for the world. Be careful: If you make him angry three times, he will shoot you. You'll also talk to yourself quite a bit, which fills you in on some of the details of your past.

In the end, if you make all the right moves, you'll be treated to a happy ending. Of course, you'll still have to enjoy it in your borrowed body.



to overlay the broken staircase that leads down through the trap-door to the Private Lab.
 • On the balcony, place a cannon ball in the holster and pull on the rope. When you step back, take the rope from around the fallen bird statue and stretch it toward the break in the brick wall to your right. Climb down it and into the blown-out metal grate.
 • The banquet room is behind the door at the far end of the Castle's Great Hall. Go there and pick up the satchel next to the fireplace. You can now start collecting objects, the first being the turkey leg on the table.
 • Stealing the crystal from Dr. Frankenstein in the Resurrection Lab is very tricky. He will scold you. Just take the notes on the shelf (H'll take you two tries), then quickly grab the crystal and immediately turn right, or else he'll shoot you double dead.

Frankenstein: Through the Eyes of the Monster

Interplay
800-969-4263

Platform: Mac CD, Win CD
 Requires: Mac LC III, double-speed CD-ROM drive, 8MB RAM, System 7
 Street Price: \$50

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★

GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★

GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★

VALUE: ★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

Frankenstein is a visually compelling video adventure that should appeal to Mary Shelley and Tim Curry fans alike.

Injected Into a Universe Roughly the Size of Your Skull, Chasing a Madman...

All You Need Is Your DRIVE to Survive.

SkyBox
MASTER SERIES
**Creators Edition
Trading Cards**

New SkyBox Master Series: Creators Edition Trading Cards are the most imaginative cards ever produced, featuring 95 all-awesome paintings of all-new characters from the fertile minds of hot artists like Julie Bell, Brom, Dave Dorman, Dave McKean and Brian Stelfreeze. Each painting is reproduced on premium SkyBox cards, with a blaze of multi-colored foil, plus bonus cards to die for: the first embossed Spectra cards. That alone would make this the most unique card line in history, but there's more...

SKYBORG

INTO THE VORTEX CD-ROM

It didn't seem fair to leave these fantastic paintings behind UV coating, so SkyBox has unleashed them full-force in cyberspace, where they occupy nine breathtaking worlds in the new SKYBORG: INTO THE VORTEX CD-ROM game. This cross-platform game marks the beginning of a new era in the gaming world, a mind-bending team-up of action, intellect, and artistry unlike anything ever seen before on CD-ROM. And you're in the middle as Skyborg, a lone cyborg on a mission to save the world. You'll need all your arcade and puzzle-solving skill to be successful, and the cards will enhance your efforts.

<http://www.skybox.com/skybox>

THE FIRST-EVER INTERACTIVE CARD LINE. AVAILABLE IN OCTOBER.

Original artwork ©1995 Dave Dorman. Original CD-ROM soundtrack by Primal Future. Exclusively distributed by SkyBox International, Inc. ©1995 SkyBox

PREVIEW

Ripper

By Bill Meyer

Ripper, Take 2 Interactive's macabre murder-mystery game, threatens to upstage Phantasmagoria as a purveyor of adult content in games. Sure, Phantasmagoria boasts that diabolical swinging axe device, but Ripper will serve up buckets of blood, a dictionary of salty language, and a cornucopia of twisted details you wouldn't want to discuss over dinner.

The carnage begins in New York City, circa 2046, as you step into the shoes of *Virtual Herald* reporter Jake Quinlan, played by newcomer Scott Cohen. After a moody and chilling video introduction, you're led to a murder site. As Quinlan, you've been covering a series of gruesome killings that have all the trademarks

Walken is not the only star.



of Victorian London's Jack the Ripper, and this looks

like yet another graphic example. Blood covers the floor and walls and soaks a nearby computer. While there, you spy a familiar face: Detective Vincent Magnotta, played by seasoned film actor and *Pulp Fiction* star Christopher Walken. Magnotta's nervous, and with murders like this piling up, it's easy to understand why.

As game play begins, it's time to do your best bloodhound impersonation as you try to sniff out clues in a variety of futuristic/Victorian 3-D environments. You'll interact with more than 30 bizarre video characters, including David Patrick Kelly from *The Warriors* and *Twin Peaks*, Jimmie Walker from *Good Times*, and the omnipresent John Rhys-Davies of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Sliders*, and *Wing Commander III*.

Ripper evokes its graphic, dark, adult personality with a new first-person perspective that lets you snoop, gather clues, and pick up important items. You'll see yourself only when you encounter other characters; address them with a mouse

click, and initiate a video-clip conversation from the game's more than 2½ hours-store of full-motion-video.

Take 2 says it added the elements of classic horror and gore to the game to build suspense and actually scare players. That's why you watch a trio of innocents get carved up before the game even begins, while another pair give up the ghost during the game itself. One victim loses not only his lunch, but also his large intestine as the mysterious killer splits his belly from end to end.

Other potential targets somehow survive the Ripper's attacks, including your partner and love interest Catherine Powell (Tahnee Welch, Raquel's equally adorable daughter), who collapses into a coma. Scores of distressing ambient noises, classic screams, eerie voices, and rapid-fire images will also help keep you on the edge of your seat.

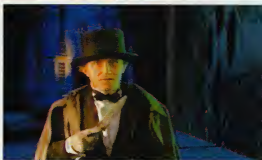
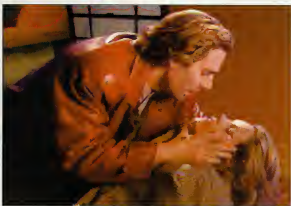
More gritty realism comes via the R-rated script. Detective Magnotta spews streams of profanity as he interrogates prostitutes and drug dealers at the Greenwich Police Station. Suspect, cyber-psychotic, and knife collector Joey Falconetti,

played by Kelly, doesn't spare sensitive ears either.

Weak constitutions should also steel themselves before entering the Tribeca Center for Cyber-Cognitive Studies, where you'll meet the mysterious and suspicious Dr. Clare Burton (*Animal House*'s Karen Allen). Pathologist Vic Farley, played by Peter Boyden, casually smokes and eats as he carves up the bodies.

One of many possible suspects.

Your partner and love interest Catherine Powell falls into a coma after an attack.



Serious gamers should enjoy cracking some 40 puzzles—from breaking into personal audio journals to decrypting police scrambles—and battling giant rats in cyberspace in the vein of *Creature Shock*. But Ripper should also appeal to horror fans in the mood for a good scare.

Ripper

Take 2 Interactive
Software
800-728-2532

Platform: DOS CD
Available: November



"Hi. I'm Professor B. Maggio, the inventor of the AURA Interactor Cushion. After a career at the computer, I was looking for something a little more exciting. Since I've been inventing a lot (weak ankles), I've added the Interactor Cushion. Hook it up to your PC, TV, stereo, whatever, and the patented electro-magnetic actuation technology turns sound into impulses you can actually feel, adding an exciting 3D dimension to practically any medium. You'll want to be at your PC seven days a week, if you're not already. Call us at 800-909-AURA and find out where to get yours."

"You just took a
\$5000 hit for your new PC.
For a few
more bucks, you can really
feel IT."



I Have No Mouth, And I Must Scream

By Donald St. John

Lucky you. You're one of the last five people left in the whole universe, stuck in the bowels of the Earth, and the other four are wholly repugnant, tormented souls that no self-respecting human would be caught dead or alive with. Then again, you're repugnant and tormented too. All of you are under the control of an insane supercomputer that's doing the tormenting. And it looks like there's no way out.

Welcome to the deranged world of *I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream*, an adventure game on the way from Cyberdreams. The game is based on the famous short story of the same name by science-fiction master Harlan Ellison.

Lock up the kiddies, folks, because this one ain't pretty. Psychic torture, grisly physical transformations, rape, double-

dealing—all that and more are the stuff of *I Have No Mouth*. In some respects, you're playing a standard adventure game: Find the objects you need to solve puzzles, get knowledge, and achieve your goal. But this game will ask a lot of you in terms of the psychological and ethical choices you'll make during game play.

For those familiar with Ellison's prolific writings, the moral dilemmas will come as no surprise. Although the vitriolic Ellison favors futuristic settings, he avoids ray-guns and other sci-fi clichés in favor of such themes as alienation in modern society, free will vs. compulsion, and the dehumanizing effects of increasing mechanization. This game concentrates on that last theme, albeit with the chance for a happier ending than you frequently find in Ellison's writings. (Keep in mind that the game's title was the last line in Ellison's story.)

Cyberdreams, working closely with Ellison, has hewed closely to the original story while adding the necessary gaming elements. You play as one of the five characters: Gorrister, a suicidal loner guilty over his wife's death; Ellen, a prim engineer who turns into jelly at the sight of anything yellow; Benny, a former military general transformed into a slobbering simian; Ted, a suave but extremely paranoid socialite; and Nimdok, a scientist who apparently conducted Nazi-like experiments. Whichever character you take on, the goal is simple: Escape to the surface and away from AM, the mad supercomputer who exterminated the rest of humanity and exerts a warped control over the remaining five. (Ellison does AM's voice.) Lose, and you'll continue living in your own private Idaho.

Judging by an early preview version, the game's graphics are frequently uneven. Environments are rendered with fine detail, with most of the action occurring in Gothic-style rooms or subterranean caverns. But not much effort seems to have been spent on character movement, which isn't overly realistic. Cyberdreams has done much better overall graphical work in *Dark Seed* and the H.R. Giger *Screen Saver*; it seems the eye candy here may have been a bit of an afterthought.

Indeed, the lion's share of the attention seems to have gone to the story. You'll have to make constant choices as you look for items, not all of them simple. Game play is basic and easily mastered; it's a typical set of walk/talk/pick-up/use commands, with conversational choices sprinkled throughout. You'll encounter many other characters—some real, some apparitions—who yield much of the information you'll need. Still, it's your interaction with the other four prisoners—and, more importantly, with yourself and AM—that determine the outcome of this fascinating tale.

Do you have anything on under that skirt, Anubis?

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Do you have anything on under that skirt, Anubis?

Ah, yes, the ol' angel vs. devil conflict.



AM's world is not a funhouse.



I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream
Cyberdreams
818-223-9990

Platform: DOS CD
Available: October

THE YEAR 2055...
UNCOVER SECRETS OF THE
DEEP... DISCOVERIES
THAT MAY CHANGE
THE COURSE OF MANKIND OR
END ITS EXISTENCE

S.T.O.R.M.



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-Next Generation



SEGA SATURN



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Panic In The Park

By Steve Klett

Everybody loves the rides, the cheesy midway games, and the equally cheesy atmosphere of a favorite amusement park. But nobody cares for the crowds, grime, and long lines that come with it.

WarnerActive's *Panic In The Park* gives you Skyview Park all to yourself—complete with a pocketful of change. There's just one tiny problem. It seems the park's founder has died and his twin daughters—both played by *Playboy* playmate and former *Boywatch* star Erika Eleniak—are feuding over Skyview's future. Jamie, the nice twin, wants to save the park, while her evil sister Janie wants to tear it down. (Both remain conservatively dressed from start to finish, so if you're looking for a cheap thrill, look elsewhere.) A deed, giving ownership of Skyview to its employees, has been stolen. If it's not found by morning, Janie gets her way.

To find the deed, you—the town's reporter—must wander through the park, play all of its games, and listen carefully to what its employees tell you. There are four game concourses in the park, each with three games. Games range from skee-ball and shuffleboard clones to the more original *Crossing The Chasm* game, in which you play *Evil Knivel*. Win all the games in each concourse, and the third game's vendor will give you a special coin. Collect all four coins to gain entrance to the Oracle's chamber. Solve its riddles and you'll uncover the location of the deed and, eventually, the thief.

Knocking down these Fuzzy Freaks is a challenge. Keep a close eye on the power meter on the left when shooting.



Practice each of Skyview's games before looking for the deed.

You play *Panic In The Park* via a first-person perspective similar to *Myst*. Each of the games is played with the mouse, with most merely requiring you to click the button at the right time. *Panic In The Park* is surprisingly short when you consider it ships on three discs. I played through it in roughly five hours, and I cheated only once (for the cheat, see tips below). However, because any one of nine characters can be the thief and there are multiple hiding places for the deed, developer Imagination Pilots claims *Panic In The Park* has more than 200 possible outcomes.

The game pulls a *Jeckyl and Hyde* when it comes to sound. Audio effects in the game booths are superb, as is the character dialogue. Unfortunately, though, there are no ambient sounds when you're exploring the park. The simple addition of chirping crickets or even faint carnival music in the background would have been a nice touch.

Otherwise, *Panic In The Park* is a quality game. The smooth video segments run full-screen and in perfect sync with the audio. The game's graphics are simply superb, giving Skyview a believable 3-D look and feel. And each of the games is well-designed, appropriate, and just plain fun to play: *Gopher Gong*, in which you pound furry little rodents with an exceptionally large mallet, is a personal favorite. Just like a real amusement

Time to put up or shut up. You've got three chances to pick the guilty mug.



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• Check every screen carefully with the cursor for hidden hot spots that will reveal clues and the occasional Easter egg. Found the sweetshop girl in concourse 3? • The third game booth is usually the toughest in each concourse. If you can't win, you can buy a victory if you have enough tokens. Of course, you could always just hit "Ctrl-W" for an instant win. • Take time out for a dance lesson in concourse 2; you'll be glad you did. • Win each game on the first try, pick the thief on your first attempt, and Jamie will offer you the opportunity of a lifetime.

Panic In The Park

WarnerActive
800-693-3253

Developer: Imagination Pilots
Platform: Win CD, Mac CD
PC requirements: 486/33, 8MB RAM, Windows 3.1, double-speed CD-ROM drive
Mac requirements: 68040, 6.5MB RAM, System 7.0, QuickTime 2.0, double-speed CD-ROM drive
List Price: \$49-\$60

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

An inviting adventure/whodunit game, especially for new players.

Guess what the Cardassians and Bajorans will be giving this year?

STAR TREK EMISSARY GIFT SET



Soy happy holidays to the STAR TREK fan on your list in a very interactive way with the incredible new **Star Trek™ Emissary Gift Set**. Featuring the highly acclaimed **Star Trek: The Next Generation™ Interactive Technical Manual** CD-ROM, **Star Trek: Deep Space Nine Harbinger™ Holosuite Missions** CD-ROM, **"Star Trek: Deep Space Nine™ Emissary"** the series pilot on video, and **Star Trek™ Conversational Klingon**, an audio CD product, this amazing set is packed full of intergalactic adventures, excitement, and fun!

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AUDIO



Spycraft: The Great Game

By Steve Klett



Russian elections in 1996 set the stage. A Russian presidential candidate is assassinated, and it's up to you to find out who did it. From there, the plot snowballs until you find yourself making life-and-death decisions that could mean the end of world order as we know it.

In an effort to provide both a believable story and realistic game play, Activision enlisted some impressive hired guns: William Colby, former director of the CIA; Oleg Kalugin, former KGB major general; and James Adams, a leading international intelligence and terrorism correspondent and author.

Spycraft blends 35mm film, digital-video footage, still photography, and actual stock footage from the CIA, which lends a movie-like look and feel to the game. You view the action from a first-person perspective, through Thorn's eyes. All the latest high-tech spy gadgets will be at your disposal, including advanced satellite imaging and a futuristic

Ever wondered what it would be like to be a spy—Jack Ryan in one of Tom Clancy's political thrillers, or the suave 007 in the James Bond flicks? If so, Activision may have just the game for you.

In *Spycraft: The Great Game*, which Activision plans to release by the end of the year, you'll take on the role of rookie CIA spook Thorn in the dangerous, high-tech world of international espionage.

The upcoming Russian elections in 1996 set the stage. A Russian presidential candidate is assassinated, and it's up to you to find out who did it. From there, the plot snowballs until you find yourself making life-and-death decisions that could mean the end of world order as we know it.

personal digital assistant, a hand-held computer that provides instant access to the Global Intelligence Network. You'll also get to lead small teams of elite special forces troops on various missions throughout the game—similar to how Tom Arnold directed Arnold Schwarzenegger from the CIA van in the movie *True Lies*.

Activision also plans to include an online element to make the game feel even more current. Each week, you'll be able to download updated news stories related to world events and send messages to an online "character" at Activision to get more clues. However, Activision says you won't need the online info to play the game.

Spycraft will be a native Windows 95 game and will ship on three or four CD-ROMs. It will include approximately 80 "V-links," the video communication links between Thorn and other agents in the field. In addition to the various 35mm film segments used to propel the plot, the game will use more than 400 still photographs as backgrounds. Game settings range from the CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, to Heidelberg, Germany, as well as Moscow. In all, there will be about 60 locations for Thorn to explore either physically or electronically. Twenty-six actors appear in the game, with Russian actors playing the Russian parts, which means no phony accents.

Spycraft is more brain-twister than action game; you must gather and assess clues to determine where to go and what to do next. Activision says *Spycraft* will be essentially non-linear, so you won't be tied to doing things in any specific order. Instead, the choices you make will determine how the game ends. Choose poorly, and you'll be kicked out of the Agency. Choose wisely, and you'll be welcomed home a hero. Just don't expect easy choices: Many decisions will test your morality as well as your craftiness. For example, one game situation will force you to decide whether or not to murder an innocent person to save the lives of a thousand others.

Spycraft: The Great Game

Activision
800-477-3650

Platform: Win 95 CD
Available: December



Intelink is your tie to world events. Visit this site as often as you can.


Doctor, the patient is bleeding profusely
from a gunshot wound.
He's losing
consciousness.
His blood pressure is
80 over 18. Should
you operate?
Give CPR?
You have
60 seconds
to save
his life.

Thank God it's only a game.



another human
drama from our

**fun &
games**
dept.

The emergency room of Legacy™ Memorial Hospital has hired a new doctor: you. Emergency Room CD-ROM uses real actors in a photo-realistic setting, with over 35 minutes of full-motion video, 14 exam tools, 20 lab tests, and X-rays for every part of the body. It's the most realistic medical experience you can have without malpractice insurance.  Check out Emergency Room on the Internet at <http://www.cdrom.ibm.com>. To order, visit your local retailer or call 1 800 426-7235 (source code 5210).

IBM

Lords Of Midnight

By Barry Brenesal

Days and seasons change
before your eyes.

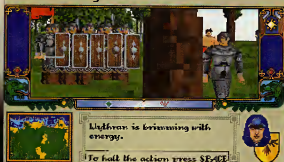


In the land of Bloodmarch, the crusade led by your father, King Luxor, to recover a powerful talisman has met with complete disaster. Thousands of warriors have perished. Royalty from every part of the land has been imprisoned, freezing subordinate nobles at home with fear and uncertainty. No one dares attack the evil ruler Boroth the Wolfheart for fear of reprisals. No one, that is, except you, Prince Morkin, and your small, hidden alliance. It's you and your supporters against the hordes of darkness.

Such is the setting of Domark's long-awaited *Lords of Midnight*. Not really a role-playing game, it's more a strategic war simulation in a world filled with medieval keeps, enchanted weaponry, and flying dragons. You start with six heroes and a few hundred men. Before the game is over, though, you'll have recruited many of Bloodmarch's 163 potential candidates for your alliance and marched tens of thousands of soldiers across an impressive landscape.

You form alliances in *Lords of Midnight* very much in the style of *Dragonriders of Pern*, a decade-old text-based game. One of your characters approaches an unaligned person, who possesses from three to five "qualities," such as loyalty, valor,

Wythran the Weaver



Heroes are only as mighty as
the armies they lead.

Aloroth the Fey



Walking in a winter wonderland.

recklessness, and so on. If the two characters have similar qualities, you stand a better chance of convincing the unaligned person to join your cause.

Some independent lords and ladies, however, will resist your entreaties because

their leaders remain imprisoned in the Dark Citadel of Maranor. Others prefer Boroth the Wolfheart, and these you must avoid or defeat in battle.

In battle, *Lords of Midnight* switches to a third-person perspective of your hero and the opponent in singular combat. You can control the very simple offensive and defensive possibilities for your side, or you can simply let things play out to a conclusion. Armies contribute to the strength and health of combatants—the bigger your army, the better you'll do. It's seldom clear, however, who is superior at arms until combat actually takes place, and you're never offered the option of a retreat. Also, there are no stats-governing abilities in *Lords of Midnight*, although some lords are described as better generals.

While these one-on-one battles feel a bit undernourished, they look fantastic. In a world rendered in hi-res Super VGA graphics, you'd think that *Lords of Midnight*'s fairly low-res

MOGA graphics would come off as nothing more than a bad smudge in a dimly lit room—but you'd be wrong. Despite the technical limitations, the game's producers have created a broad, glowing palette of color and stylishly drawn objects.

The general menu is particularly attractive. Presented as the Book of Bloodmarch, you choose a different colored "book" every time you load a different saved game. Each "chapter heading" is an informational category or activity enhanced by beautiful visuals. You can look up creatures in the



Anyone to recruit up there? Better find out.

Almanac & Bestiary, for instance, or page through Lords of Midnight's roster of Heroes & Villains. Learn the details of Bloodmarch's geography in The Travelers Guide, or discover what alliances you control in Fellowshipships. As you play, the contents grow to reflect your increasing knowledge of Bloodmarch's lands.

A top-down map lets you track all the major and minor players in the saga, each represented by his or her shield. Lords of Midnight lets you zoom in or out of the map, but the awkward compass controls force you to tap various on-screen arrows to move. From the map, you can also provide heroes with quests, sending them to attack enemies, locate objects, or recruit neutral characters. But tracking the route of a hero in your employ can be difficult: It involves tracing a convoluted trail that easily gets lost among other similar trails.

Heroes travel by land, sea, or dragonback. You can look at any of these options from several "camera" angles, and these scenes are among the high points of the game. Lords of Midnight's vivid 3-D texture-mapped graphics create a world of mountains, forests, and rivers, where your character traverses slopes and boards ships. The seasons change. The sun rises and sets gloriously. It's enough to make you want to stop playing and watch the land's moods unfold before you.

But stock up on patience before you take over character movement (instead of simply watching your hero in action). You don't turn left by clicking West or hitting the "4" key

Character movement is awkward, but fun to watch.

on your numerical keypad. Rather, hitting the key causes you to begin circling counter-clockwise—and you keep doing so until you click to continue moving forward, or tap the "6" key, in which case you start spiraling the other way. Hit the Escape key to get back to computer control. The game doesn't impress audibly, either. The soundtrack becomes quickly repetitive, and there are few other sound effects at all.

In spite of these problems, Lords of Midnight is continually impressive. The number of characters and quests, the vast landscape, and the fine artificial intelligence of your computerized opponent guarantee an open-ended universe, one that makes for truly satisfying play again and again. Lords of Midnight isn't easy to win, but it's well-nigh impossible to abandon.

Lords of Midnight

Spectrum HoloByte
800-695-4263

Developer: Domark/Malestrom
Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486/33, 8MB RAM,
Sound Blaster-compatible, double-speed CD-ROM drive
List Price: \$49.95

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★

GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★

SOUND CHECK: ★ ★

VALUE: ★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

Awkward movement controls cannot conceal the richness of this visually outstanding and strategically rewarding game.

Whenever a prisoner is freed from the Dark Citadel, he races back home on a dragon. After that, you should attempt to recruit the lords and ladies in his portion of the land to your cause.

- To win, you must destroy the seat of Boreth the Wolfheart's power.
- Let some recruiters move without armed forces so they can travel at top speed.
- You cannot recruit from dragonback, but the game will not warn you if you schedule this kind of quest.
- Leave at least 100 men in every castle you control to prevent early attacks.
- Never try to recruit with a complete mismatch of qualities. You might not get a second chance.
- As your heroes move into new areas, more listings will be available under all menu categories. Be sure to check them regularly.



Each locale has a travel center, where Ripley can book passage and send and receive mail.

strange stories, characters, and puzzles to solve, all punctuated by the sometimes corny, sometimes silly, and occasionally funny humor of Mr. Ripley.

The talisman that you—and your opponents—seek is the imperial seal of the first emperor of China. You must follow the footsteps of Master Lu, a mythical sage who traveled the world in search of the elixir of life, to unearth the clues needed to find the seal, which lies protected in an ancient Chinese emperor's tomb.

The Riddle of Master Lu is played via a third-person perspective driven by a simple point-and-click interface. To find out about something, you just click on it; to use something, do the same. Ripley tells you if

Ripley's mind isn't always on business.

you've made the right choice.

Your travels take you to many interesting places, all rendered in gorgeous Super VGA. You visit six sites in all, including Easter Island and Lima, Peru. Along the way you interact with dozens of characters who range from obnoxious to helpful to nasty to mysterious to all of the above. The video-sprite characters are detailed and well done, even if they all walk as though their spines were fused.

Your good friend Feng Li runs the Odditorium, where all the oddball creations you find in your travels are placed on display for the public—for a fee, of course (how else could you fund all your globetrotting?). Your female companion, Mei Chen, provides some help from time to time.

Don't expect much aid, however. Finding the talisman is mostly up to you and will likely require all the brain power you can muster. The game's puzzles can be extremely difficult and at times border on the insanely puzzling. Logic will not always get you through, and some actions must be executed in a specific order to work properly. Several puzzles require a great many steps and shrewd attention to detail. And there's no gradual increase in puzzle difficulty. A couple of the game's toughest challenges come early in the adventure.

As a result, the average player can expect to put in dozens of hours completing The Riddle of Master Lu. Unfortunately, a good chunk of that time will be spent listening to incredibly long-winded and, at times, extremely boring dialogue. What's worse is that there's no way to skip through a scene, even if you've seen it before. The game's sound is also a mixed bag. Each location features nice ambient sounds that add to the immediacy, but the musical score is nothing to brag about, and sound levels sometimes fluctuate like the tides.

Nevertheless, Ripley is sure to provide hours of hard-core, addictive, adventuring fun for fans of the adventure-game genre and Ripley's works.

The Riddle Of Master Lu

By Steve Klett

The year is 1936. The world lies on the brink of war. Evil forces are out to capture a powerful Chinese talisman in a sinister plot to rule the world. Believe it or not, it's up to you to thwart their plans.

Sound like a plot from the latest Indiana Jones flick? Actually, it's Ripley's Believe It or Not: The Riddle of Master Lu, the latest adventure game from Sanctuary Woods. In it, you play the role of Robert L. Ripley, renowned adventurer, collector of the bizarre, cartoonist, and—believe it or not—ladies man.

Anyone older than 20 is probably familiar with the 1980s Ripley's Believe It or Not television show hosted by Jack



Check out everything you see on Easter Island.

Palace—you know, the one that featured all those outlandish stories that you never knew were true or not. In the same vein, The Riddle of Master Lu is filled with all sorts of

Ripley's Believe It or Not: The Riddle Of Master Lu
Sanctuary Woods
800-943-3664

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486/25, DOS 5.0, 8MB RAM, double-speed CD-ROM drive, Super VGA, Sound Blaster-compatible
List Price: \$59.95

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ 1/2
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND EFFECTS: ★ ★ ★ 1/2
VALUE: ★ ★ ★ 1/2

The Riddle of Master Lu is a must for hard-core adventure fans, but annoying quirks may keep newcomers at bay.

♦ Search each and every screen meticulously for hidden hot spots—you never know what will be useful. ♦ In the billiards room, look very carefully at the wallpaper for a very minor, but very important, bluish. ♦ Search the desk in the billiards room as well, despite Ripley's comment that it holds nothing of interest. ♦ Knowing that a pump grip is good for plugging leaks will help you in the lab, with a little letter inversion.



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Apache The Combat Helicopter Simulation

By Sasha Alexander and Robert Chang



This ought to blow up nicely.

Interactive Magic's release of *Apache The Combat Helicopter Simulation* shows a lot of guts. Its new game goes rotor-to-rotor with new chopper sims from big-name competitors like *Origin* and *Novologic*.

But while Interactive Magic may be a new name, the company's founder, "Wild Bill" Stealey, was one of the founding fathers of *MicroProse*; he knows what it takes to make a successful game. And though *Apache* is developer Digital Integration's first attempt at a helicopter simulation—what an attempt it is.

Apache offers seven enemy skill levels, two

global flying modes (realistic and arcade), and two arcade sub-modes (normal and invincible). Realistic mode is great, but it requires you to master all of the intricacies of flying a real helicopter. That means coordinating three controls: the cyclic which controls pitch and bank, the collective which controls lift, and



Nothing like a good explosion in the morning.

the built-in null modem, modem, or network support), though, realistic mode is the best way to experience real helicopter flying without expensive lessons.

That doesn't mean flying in arcade mode is boring and primitive, however. You still have full control over your altitude and speed, but nothing else gets in the way of your primary goal—kicking enemy butt.

The choice of missions is equally impressive, including training runs in Texas and full campaigns in Yemen, Korea, and Cyprus. Sets of "canned" single missions in the three regions are also available. And these "canned" missions are not the same ones you'll find in the campaigns. Last but not least, hit the QuickStart mode, and off you go. Start flying and shooting without having to sit through mission briefings.

Of course, no military simulation is complete without the little goodies to reward you for all those T-62s you just demolished. In *Apache*, you'll advance in rank for completing major milestones, such as finishing a campaign.

Apache makes full use of two video modes—640-by-480 (with 256 colors) Super VGA and standard 320-by-200 VGA. Gamers with a VESA or PCI local-bus 486DX2/66 and above (with a VESA-compatible graphics card) should be able to take full advantage of the 640-by-480 mode. If you plan to jump into high-res network play, though, you'd better make sure your processor's name starts with a "P." *Apache* also supports most sound cards with great sound effects. In another nice touch, joystick selection and calibration is automatic—say goodbye to the typical four-point salute calibration routine. Finally, *Apache* offers leader/wingman, pilot/weapons officer, and head-to-head combat modes via modem or network.

Add one part *Novologic Comanche*, one part *MicroProse Gunship 2000*, toss in a sophisticated flight model, sprinkle with awesome Super VGA graphics, and finish it off with lots of addicting and adrenaline-pumping fun. *Apache* is like no other chopper simulation.

Apache The Combat Helicopter Simulation
Interactive Magic
800-789-1534

Developer: Digital Integration
Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486/33, 8MB RAM, DOS 5.0, local-bus Super VGA
List Price: \$69.95

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Apache stands out in a crowded field of big-name helicopter sims.



• Shoot wisely. Always look for high-priority targets. Ammo is limited and it's annoying to run out early. • Don't change your flight plan. You don't command other choppers so they'll continue on the original path—to certain death.



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EF2000

By Christopher Lindquist

Flight-sim junkies looking for something a little different may want to take to the skies in EF2000, the latest sim from British developer Digital Image Design (DID).

DID, in case you didn't know, developed the quite popular TFX (Tactical Fighter eXperiment) sim last year. The company has been working with several European governments to build an authentic flight simulation based on the Eurofighter 2000, an advanced fighter destined to find its way into NATO-member air forces by the start of the third millennium.

Gamers will get to see the results of the project (at least, whatever's not classified) when Ocean of America releases EF2000 in November. And while TFX did give you the chance to fly the Eurofighter, this is a whole new game.

Our early look at the game revealed that while EF2000 may look like just another flight sim on the surface, something



This Eurofighter 2000 is armed and ready to go.

strengths and deployment for more than 2,000 aircraft and 2,000 to 3,000 ground-based forces, including SAM sites and air bases. Wargen then assigns flight plans and waypoints for all aircraft and, using a "high risk/high return" model, presents you with the 20 to 30 most interesting missions.

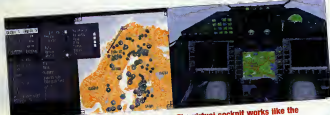
What it all means is that you can adjust the game, and it's never the same twice. Want to give the Russians superior numbers at the start? Go ahead. Want to have the jump on them yourself? You can. You don't even have to play at all: Another feature lets you watch an active map as computer-controlled aircraft carry out their orders without any human intervention.

Of course, you won't be watching video-clipped or animated cut scenes of your fellow flyboys describing that last mission or the one you're headed to next. Forget that glitz. This is war.

Once you do decide to fly, you hop into the cockpit and head out on your selected mission. The game's "virtual cockpit" view not only lets you swivel your perspective to scan the skies, but also allows you to look down at a bank of active multifunction displays for radar, weapons systems, and the other necessities of modern flight.

While flying, you can direct wingmen to perform a number of tasks, including attacking specific targets and covering your tail. However, these wingmen are also programmed to give you orders on occasion, making for more realistic game play.

Not only that, EF2000 ties it all together with crisp Super VGA graphics, network support for up to eight players, an advanced mid-flight model, and missions that include nifty twists such as in-air refueling. Plus, three levels of difficulty should get novices flying fast and keep veterans challenged. And if Wargen can create missions that really grab your interest, EF2000 may just be the flight sim to look for.



The map gives you a lowdown on thousands of units.

The virtual cockpit works like the real thing.

very different is going on under the covers. Standard flight sims walk players through a relatively unchangeable series of scripted missions during the course of a campaign. EF2000, on the other hand, uses an artificial-intelligence battle generator called "Wargen" to create a campaign from scratch.

Well, not completely from scratch, of course. The game's theater always remains the same, covering four million square

kilometers of Scandinavia and a section of Northwestern Russia. Also, the premise that a Russian force has invaded Norwegian territory stays constant. However, from that point on, it's all up to Wargen, which determines troop

EF2000

Ocean of America
408-289-1200

Developer: Digital Image Design
Platform: DOS CD
Available: November



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SEGA SATURN



SIMCITY 2000

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Al Unser Jr. Arcade Racing

Some folks don't want to get their hands dirty in the garage; they just want to buckle up and put the pedal to the metal. For these hot rodders, good, old-fashioned

arcade racing featuring furious action and slick graphics is the name of the game. Mindscape's Al Unser Jr. Arcade Racing tries to satisfy that need for speed with lots of power and 15 well-designed tracks—strictly for Windows 95.

Al Unser Jr. gives you 10 different Indy cars to choose from, as well as the ability to drive automatic or stick in each. While the cars are pretty average graphically, they do generate the feeling of



Handsome tracks and backgrounds highlight Al Unser Jr. Arcade Racing.

exhilarating speed.

Also on the plus side, the game's tracks come in all different shapes and sizes—some large and multi-laned with sweeping U-turns and long straightaways, others tight and crowded. Track bleachers, buildings, long bridges, city streets, and

tunnels, sudden dips, suspension rural scenes vary the trips nicely.

Unfortunately, the game seems to leave some crucial parts in the pit. For starters, Al Unser Jr., is nothing more than a name on the race board. And while this game isn't supposed to take on Papyrus's IndyCar Racing II (see review, page 138), Mindscape could have added a lot more excitement by showing spinouts, crashes, and pileups. In addition, your opponents apply brutal—not to mention annoying and unrealistic—blocks as you try to pass. Amazingly, a lack of rear-view mirrors prevents you from using the same tactic. Also, there's no way to review the varied tracks before you race, so you race blind. Finally, the game would have profited from multiple views, replays, and other little extras, rapidly becoming standard in this genre.

Still, if you're into racing—or looking for a fun way to get into Windows 95 gaming—Al Unser Jr. is a good way to get moving.

—Bill Meyer

Al Unser Jr. Arcade Racing

Mindscape
800-234-3088

Platform: Win 95 CD
Requires: 486DX2/66, 8MB RAM,
Windows 95, Super VGA, mouse
Street Price: \$40

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ 1/2
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ 1/2
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ 1/2
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ 1/2

Al Unser Jr. Arcade Racing has fast action and nicely designed tracks, but don't expect lots of extra frills.

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IndyCar Racing 2

Bill Meyer



The competition is tough in IndyCar Racing 2.

When it comes to realism in PC racing simulations, Papyrus cornered the market with IndyCar Racing and NASCAR Racing, mixing hot licenses with slick graphics and realistic driving models. IndyCar Racing 2 picks up where its predecessors left off, adding a full-service garage, crisp Super VGA graphics, improved computer artificial intelligence, seven more authentic IndyCar tracks and support for Windows 95 and the Power Mac.

One of the most impressive elements of IndyCar Racing 2 is the sheer number of automotive options. Choose soft, medium, or hard compound tires and set the pressure to your liking. Raise and lower your car's wings, optimize your suspension by increasing or decreasing your tire camber, give your weight jack a left or right bias, soften or stiffen all four shocks, increase or decrease your wheel lock, and make all six gears "shorter" or "taller." Don't worry, you don't have to be born in Indianapolis to understand it all. IndyCar Racing 2 comes with an extensive manual that has lots of suggestions on car setup.

Serious race fans should be impressed by Indy 2's garage, but everyone will like the game's new Super VGA graphics. A product marketer's dream, they're sharp enough to display clearly readable billboards. More importantly, though, the game's cars look significantly more realistic without sacrificing any of IndyCar's sense of speed and acceleration on high-end 486s or Pentiums. Got a slower machine? Don't worry, the game has a VGA mode so you can play, too. One look at those clean Super VGA lines, though, and you crave an upgrade. But while graphic touches—such as your tire's



Wipeouts look better than ever.



If you want to keep control, you'll have to learn every turn.

Goodyear logo spinning into a blur or the Winnebago at Michigan Speedway—are great, the tracks still seem to lack character. Track buildings often appear as bland blocks, and your pit crew looks hardly human.

Of course, the real action is on the asphalt, and here Indy 2 gets the checkered flag. This time

around, the computerized competition really responds like the pros, downshifting and accelerating into curves at the appropriate angles and speeds. In addition, your own car handles more like the real thing, underscoring the importance of correct setup for each track. Don't think you can breeze through Toronto's hairpin turns without adjusting your tires, wings, and suspension. You'll need to learn the ins and outs of each track through a lot of practice to know how to approach each curve when you put the pedal to the metal.

Finally, Papyrus has also given Indy 2 more realistic collisions. A miscalculated pass can result in dented front ends and sides or panels that come loose. And beginners will appreciate the game's arcade driving mode, which places the camera outside the car for a better view of the varied tracks.

If you are a fan of the original IndyCar Racing or a newcomer, this sequel's improved graphics, computer AI, and driving model will make you want to buckle up. And the driver's seat will be that much sweeter when The Papyrus Network, offering 32-player matches of all the company's titles, comes online next year.

IndyCar Racing 2
Virgin Interactive Entertainment
800-874-4607

Platform: DOS CD, Win 95 CD, Mac CD
Requires: 486, 8MB RAM, DOS 5.0, double-speed CD-ROM drive
List Price: \$50-\$70

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ 1/2
SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

IndyCar Racing 2's high degree of customization, sharp graphics, and superior driving model bring the thrill of racing to life like no other game.

- U
O
—
J
- Set the shift to manual so that you can downshift into turns without braking and slowing to a crawl or skidding out.
 - If you are a novice, use the arcade driving mode so that you have a better view of the more difficult tracks.
 - Guess work will not work in the garage. Study that manual so that you know how to customize your vehicle for the different venues.
 - Use soft tires and lower your suspension and wings for slower tracks such as Toronto, with tight turns.
 - Use your rear view mirrors when going around turns to block the competition from passing.

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Command & Conquer

By David Israels

Digital warmongers everywhere will probably love *Command & Conquer*. This fast-paced, action/strategy successor to *Dune 2* makes the ancient art of state-sanctioned murder as easy as point-and-click.

You begin as either the do-goody Global Defense Initiative (GDI) or

the evil Brotherhood of Nod, which are contained on two separate discs. Combat occurs in a real-time tangle as your armies fight their way through increasingly difficult missions. Cinematic cut scenes provide background information on the war and the mysterious all-powerful mineral Tiberium—a radioactive material that you must mine to raise war funds.

The graduated missions—a set of 25 for each side of the war—are the heart of the game. Your goal: Wipe out the enemy. Occasionally you will face other difficulties such as springing civilians from a prison or assassinating an enemy leader. You begin each scenario with limited resources. To make things more interesting, most of the game map is blacked out until you pass through unexplored terrain.

Game play is a matter of working fast and furiously to reconnoiter your surroundings while simultaneously expanding your base of operations as you prepare an offensive attack.

Controlling your forces is as simple as clicking on a unit, at which point a voice chimes in with an enthusiastic "Yes sir!" Pick the unit's destination and you'll hear a resounding "No problem." To attack the enemy, just click on the target and your boys happily begin the mayhem. When you make a kill, infantry units cry out as they collapse in a puddle of red pixels, and armored units explode furiously. The game offers more than a dozen keyboard shortcuts that let you order your killing machines to guard specific items, scatter to evade enemy fire, and more.



Your commander will give you plenty of direction.

No time for talk now. Attack!

Command & Conquer employs a dizzying array of 25 unit types and 22 different structures. Units include everything from grenade-tossing infantry to rocket-spitting helicopters. Structures range from the prosaic construction yard to the Nod's fanciful Obelisk of Light, which emits incredibly accurate and deadly laser beams. Certain units and structures are available to only one side; for example, only Nod has access to flame-throwing weapons.

The game's artificial intelligence seems smarter than *Dune 2*'s, but it's still not ready for brain surgery. For instance, units sometimes take circuitous routes instead of the shortest path between points. The Tiberium harvesters are particularly dimwitted, although the game's designers say that their dense behavior was intentional—you see, they're operated by civilians. More damning, the enemy rarely seems to make coordinated mass attacks, choosing instead to dribble soldiers out of its base in small groups that never pose much of a threat.

Other drawbacks include tired graphics and grating music. The game's inexcusably blocky VGA graphics use a visually dull 320-by-200 screen resolution. And the rocking techno-beat soundtrack quickly becomes repetitive and annoying. Even more annoying, if you turn it off, the tunes return before each mission.

Although *Command & Conquer* provides a good deal of its promised spills, thrills, and kills, it left this mouse-pad general disappointed. The problem is too much conquer and not enough command. The design, which resembles a seamless video game with its lockstep progression of predetermined missions, makes C&C feel restricted and frustrating. If sorely needs a scenario or map editor.

The design missteps stood out clearly after I played the modem and network versions of the game. Multiplayer matches let you choose the map, starting funds, number of initial units, and tech level. What fun it would be to have that kind of control and more in single-player mode! But sadly, *Command & Conquer* only lets me imagine what a great game it might have been.

TIPS

- Destroy your opponent's harvesters and you will probably cripple him.
- If you're getting zapped by the Nod's Obelisk of Light, avoid a direct attack. You can neutralize it by taking out a power plant.
- Armored personnel carriers loaded with engineers can be devilishly effective, because they let you capture and use enemy structures.
- The GDI's mammoth tanks can withstand a direct hit from a Nod nuclear missile.
- Infantry can destroy tanks if you keep the grunts moving. Otherwise, the armored units will run over the foot soldiers with a satisfying squish.

Command & Conquer
Virgin Interactive
Entertainment
800-874-4607



Developer: Westwood Studios
Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486/33, 8MB RAM,
DOS 5.0, VGA, double-speed CD-ROM
drive
List Price: \$99.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ 1/2
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★

This okay game could've been great with more command and less conquer.

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Steel Panthers

By Steve Klett

Strategic Simulations' Panzer General struck just the right balance of detailed game play and ease of use to win mass appeal—a major victory for a strategy game. However, its simplicity alienated some hard-core strategy players. Now, Steel Panthers, SSD's latest effort, should satisfy both of these distinct audiences.

Steel Panthers lets would-be generals choose from a wide variety of nationalities and campaigns covering just about every major theater of World War II. For example, players can command the awesome German blitzkrieg during the 1939 invasion of Poland and continue on to the end of the war, or take control of the U.S.'s island-hopping campaign against Japan in the Pacific. Looking for more? Then choose to play the Russian, Italian, or French armies. By way of contrast, Panzer General allowed players to fight only as the Germans in Europe.

Campaigns in Steel Panthers are based on historical battles and generally consist of a series of scenarios in which you must defend or advance territory, and then secure it. You can also choose the exact year you want to start a campaign or fight an individual battle, such as The Battle of the Bulge. If that's not enough, there's even a fictional campaign that pits the U.S. against Russia for control of Germany.

Even better, an editor feature

lets you create your own battles or campaigns. You can also play against a friend via modem or e-mail.

Each of the different armies in Steel Panthers has the strengths and limitations of its historical counterpart. For example, the Germans are generally more experienced and technically superior to nearly every Allied power. However, more often than not, the Germans are outnumbered.

Don't let the name of the game fool you, Steel

Panthers is as much about infantry combat as it is about tank battles. You'll need to use engineers to clear mines and tank traps while you conduct house-to-house fighting in cities. You'll also have to monitor the morale of each of your units and rally them at critical points.

All the gorgeous Super VGA action is viewed from a bird's-eye perspective of the battlefield, which shows individual squads of troops and tanks. Movement is hex-based, with each hex representing 50 yards. Each unit can also perform multiple actions during a turn. For instance, a tank can fire, unload troops, move, stop, fire again, and move again in a single turn.

Artillery also plays a vital role in Steel Panthers. You can set up mortar, cannon, and naval barges as well as air strikes. You'll see each and every shell fall on your hapless enemy as it happens. Buildings and foliage burst into flames when struck.

Steel Panthers has few shortcomings. Sound effects—from the soft "pops" of mortars being fired to the violent crash of heavy artillery—are excellent, but they sometimes lag slightly behind battle animations. The game's point-and-click interface, which is similar to Panzer General's, makes commanding your troops a breeze. Authentic WWII film footage and a weapons encyclopedia with 200 digitized photos of tanks add to the fun. The only real drawback is the inability to select several units at the same time for a simultaneous attack.

If Panzer General left you wanting for more detail, or if you thought it was perfect—heck, even if you've never heard of the game—give Steel Panthers a try.



Two Finnish ski patrols are no match for all those Russian tanks.



A Japanese Banzai attack overwhelms a U.S. Marine base.

Steel Panthers

Strategic Simulations
800-601-7529

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486/33, 8MB RAM,
DOS 5.0, Super VGA, double-speed
CD-ROM drive, mouse
Street Price: \$45



- Use smoke screens to cover troops advancing across open areas. ● Wait a few turns for the artillery to soften up a target before beginning an attack, particularly against the Japanese or Russians. ● Don't call in an air strike when friendly troops are near the target. ● When playing as the Russians, use a formation of tanks to provide cover fire while another formation advances, and then reverse roles. ● Attacking Panther and Tiger tanks directly is certain death. Use superior numbers to outflank them and attack at their soft spots.

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Steel Panthers retains Panzer General's ease of use, but adds enough detail to please hard-core war gamers.

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Monopoly

By Bill Meyer

Half the fun of playing Monopoly is that you get the opportunity to taunt and humiliate friends and loved ones as you bankrupt them on a hotel-covered Pennsylvania Avenue. Previous computer conversions of the Parker Brothers classic often lost this crucial element by making everybody huddle around the ol' 15-inch monitor—or by forcing you to play against the unplayable computer.

Gain...

Now Virgin and developer Westwood Studios have put some of the banter and action back into computerized Monopoly by offering more than the convenience of never losing the card for Vermont Avenue. This Monopoly takes advantage of what a computer has to offer. You'll find beautiful 3-D animation, authentic 1930s ragtime music, loads of options, and unique multiplayer capabilities that let you

challenge wanna-be capitalists over the Internet.

You heard right: Westwood's Monopoly enables true global competition. Players can initiate

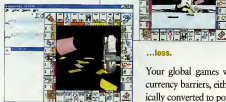
Each token has its own set of wacky animations.

Monopoly
Virgin Interactive
Entertainment
800-874-4607

Developer: Westwood Studios
Platform: Win/Win 95 CD
Requires: 486/33, Super VGA, double-speed CD-ROM drive, Sound Blaster-compatible, mouse
List Price: \$39.99

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2
SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE: ★ ★ ★ ★

If you think computerized board games can't improve upon their predecessors, Monopoly's great graphics, sound, and network play should change your mind.



terse commentary during tense deal making.

This Monopoly also visually represents what in times past you could only imagine. I always wondered how crappy Baltic Avenue must look after I laid down my \$60 and my best friend called me a slumlord. Now you actually get to see humorous renditions of each empty lot—from low-budget Mediterranean Avenue, littered with tires and trash, to posh Pacific Avenue, replete with trimmed hedges and pink flamingos.

The player tokens also come to life in a series of playful animations presented during laps around the board. For instance, the Top Hat drops a bunch of bunnies, and the cruise boat submerges below the board. In all, some 800 animations celebrate the various ups and downs of the game, including landing on Chance and Community Chest, "just visiting" jail, and collecting \$200 for passing "Go."



The good life.

The poor house.

Even more important, Monopoly purists won't be disappointed by the game play. The computer version follows

the 1936 original to the letter. For example, in standard play, you can't simply pass up buying a vacant property when you happen to land on it; you have to auction it off to the highest bidder.

Thrill-seeking modern players have a dozen options to jazz up games, from allowing Free Parking to various kinds of cheating. And if the animations slow down the wheeling and dealing, you can eliminate some or all of them. Finally, clever options, such as grayed out property spaces that are still up for sale, make it easy to read the board.

There's still room for some subtle improvements. Having to leave the program to manually select a computer opponent from the CD-ROM is an unnecessary inconvenience. Also, you'll find your baby brother was a tougher negotiator than any of these computer players. You can't interrupt the animated clips, either. Just the same, this Monopoly is the first computer conversion of a board game that actually adds to the original.

"...the most intense pinball experience that
you can get outside an arcade."

Chris Gore
Computer Player

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realistic
and you'd be
pulling gum off
the bottom of
your computer.

WILD WEST



BLACK JACK PANEL GAME



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THE ABYSS



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Qwirks

You can't really call Spectrum HoloByte's new Qwirks "the most addicting action-puzzle game since Tetris," because in many ways it is Tetris. Part of a new series of arcade brain busters endorsed by Alexey Pajitnov, the inventor of Tetris, Qwirks pastes a threadbare plot on top of a blobby version of Tetris's falling blocks. This time, though, you eliminate stuff on the screen based on color, not shape.

Pairs of colored blobs (Qwirks) fall from the top of the screen, and your task is to group four like-colored blobs together, at which point they "transmogrify to the eighth dimension," or disappear. Better still, try to arrange the Qwirks so that when you eliminate one group, others fall into the spaces to match up another group. This cascade effect quickly boosts your score and clears large areas of the screen.

Qwirks
Spectrum HoloByte
800-695-4263



Developer: Compile Corp/Big Bang
Platform: Win CD
Requires: 386/33, 4MB RAM, Windows 3.1, Super VGA
List Price: \$20-\$30

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ 1/2
SETTING STARTER: ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ 1/2
SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★
VALUE: ★ ★ ★ 1/2

Bottom line: Think Tetris with falling colors instead of falling bricks.



Looks kind of like Tetris, doesn't it?

That's not all. Spectrum HoloByte jazzes up its latest twist on Tetris with three special modes. In addition to just striving for a high score, you can challenge bizarre "Zoo Creatures" or take on another human player sharing the keyboard. But because eliminating Qwirks on your side of the screen sends unmatchable Clear Qwirks to your opponent, these head-to-head matches don't last very long. More contemplative types may want to check out the puzzle mode, where the goal is to clear the board of all Qwirks.

All the action plays out on attractive screens, accompanied by decent sound effects and horrendous digital music. There's not much originality in Qwirks, but that doesn't mean it isn't fun to play.

—Fredric Paul

Electronic Entertainment

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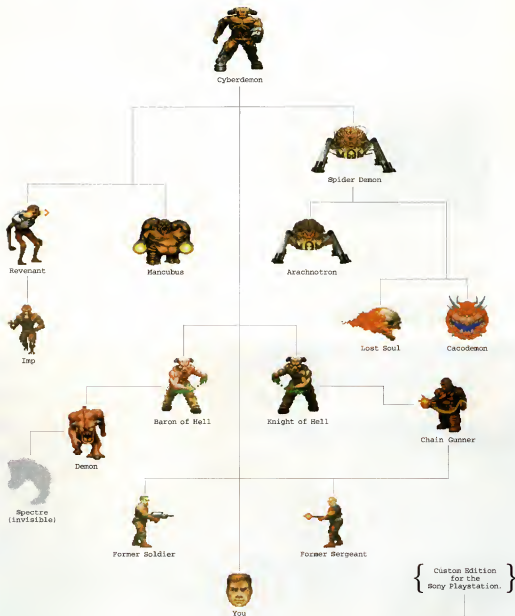
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{ An introduction to the hierarchy of Doom. }



Doom. The Sony Playstation Custom Edition. Over 50 levels of madness and mayhem from Doom I and II. Plus all new levels of destruction as well. Every weapon, monster, and surprise you loved before. Plus a two-player Deathmatch mode for when you're feeling really nasty. The nice thing about Doom is you always know where you stand. Even if it's at the bottom of the food chain.



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Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure

Has it really been 13 years since the first Pitfall game? Indeed, it has. But to prove that everything old someday becomes new again,

Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure
Activision
800-477-3650

Platform: Win 95
Requires: 486/33, 8MB RAM,
Windows 95, double-speed CD-ROM
drive
List Price: \$49.95



GAME PLAY:	★ ★ 1/2
BETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2
VALUE:	★ ★ ★

Pitfall comes to Windows 95, but the animation dropouts may spoil your fun.

Windows 95 incarnation of Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure.

As action games go, Pitfall lands at the middle of the pack. This largely run-and-jump-to-the-right-style game throws in a fair number of bonus levels and hidden features (look for the original Pitfall). Animation-wise, the game does fairly well, too. Harry Jr.'s movement is solidly depicted, with only a couple of problems. (Die in midair, and Harry

Look for hidden Harry icons. These are extra lives.



CHEATS



Want nine continues? Type: eatmorethan.
Need nine lives? Type this cat-centric cheat: Meowmeowkamecowman. • To enable the 2600 level in the file menu type: letsdothetimerwarp.

lies down without falling, for instance.) On the sound scene, Pitfall rules. You not only get plenty of voices, you also get a

big, resonant soundtrack and the option to listen to other ambient noises. It appears that this Windows 95 version includes the levels and the graphics of the Sega Genesis 32X version plus the sound found on the Sega CD disc of Pitfall.

Pitfall runs at 256 colors and 640-by-480 maximum resolution. But even running the game at a low-res 320-by-240 on a Pentium 90 with a 4MB PCI-based Super VGA board, quad-speed CD-ROM drive, and 16MB of RAM left a fair amount to be desired.

The result is that although the game's inherent difficulty is only average, technical issues make it annoyingly tough. The primary problem is dropped animation frames. You'll fall because you couldn't see the frame that had the platform in it and die because the boss attacks when you can't see it. We can only hope that Activision is able to fix these problems, either with a patch for Harry, or with its next Windows 95 game.

—Rick Raymo

Electronic Entertainment's

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IBM

Magic Carpet 2: Netherworlds

By Steve Klett

Whenever a sequel to one of my favorite movies comes out, I cringe a little bit, worrying that they went and ruined a good thing. Thankfully, quickly improving technology seems to eliminate this problem with sequels to good games. Happily, Bullfrog's *Magic Carpet 2: Netherworlds* is no exception.

As a mere apprentice wizard in the original *Magic Carpet*, you restored equilibrium to the shattered realms in the great Wizard War. With the release of the sequel, though, there's little time to bask in your glory.

Having feasted on the souls of those damned to the Netherworlds for an eternity, the Master Demon—Vissuluth

The Dark One—has grown powerful enough to bridge the gap between his world and yours. Now this bad boy and his nefarious minions of darkness are threatening the world of men. Once again, it's up to you, the lowly apprentice magician, to save mankind. But this time you won't be entirely on your own: Your old master Kafkar will provide you with guidance from his eternal prison in the Netherworlds.

On the surface, *Magic*

Carpet 2 does not appear to have been changed significantly from its predecessor—it sports the same graphics and first-person perspective of the original. However, once you dig into the game a little, you will find many differences.

You must accomplish specific goals in each of *Magic Carpet 2*'s 25 missions to advance to the final confrontation with Vissuluth. Kafkar will brief you on the task at hand before each mission, and a beautiful map screen records your progress. Before you can get to the Master Demon, you'll have to battle (multiple times) his seven wizard servants, including Nyphur The Shape Changer and Belix The Pitiless One. Of course, Mana still represents the source of all



Night missions are just one new feature.



Um, why don't you guys take him on first?

magic, and you'll need to hoard as much of it as you can to defeat Vissuluth.

Along the way, you'll uncover roughly a dozen new spells, such as the truly creepy "spider army" spell. You also get 11 new monsters to battle, including a six-headed Hydra. The game also sports a faster game

engine, which let Bullfrog add a lot of new graphical twists—such as night-time and cavern missions—without sacrificing game play. Skimming over rolling waves that reflect a full moon in *Magic Carpet 2*'s night-time missions is quite a surreal experience.

But the most notable difference is the sequel's more developed story; the compelling plot may even make you want to finish the sequel more than the original. Finishing *Magic Carpet 2* is also a much more attainable goal for average game players than was completing the first *Magic Carpet*. First of all, *Magic Carpet 2* has only 25 missions, while the original had 50. Then there's the online help feature and the flight-assist feature that makes surfing the skies on that magical rug a bit easier for newbies.

So, hotshots who mastered the first game may find the sequel a little soft. But new players—and those turned off by the original game's difficulty—should definitely sign on for the newest magic-carpet ride.



Still gotta love these volcanoes.

Magic Carpet 2

Electronic Arts
800-245-4525

Developer: Bullfrog Productions
Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486/66, 8MB RAM, DOS 5.0, VGA, double-speed CD-ROM drive, mouse
List Price: \$59.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★

While smaller and considerably easier than the original, *Magic Carpet 2* still provides an enjoyable ride.

- Check the map carefully for any spells you might have missed before exiting a completed level.
- Backing up while firing is still the best combat strategy when outnumbered or fighting a more powerful foe.
- When you kill one of the evil wizards, immediately search out and destroy his castle. He will be reincarnated if you don't.
- The meteor spell is particularly devastating against grouped enemies, as is the create-castle spell.

Completed level. Backing up while firing is still the best combat strategy when outnumbered or fighting a more powerful foe. When you kill one of the evil wizards, immediately search out and destroy his castle. He will be reincarnated if you don't. The meteor spell is particularly devastating against grouped enemies, as is the create-castle spell.

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Hexen

By Bill Meyer

Feel like the whole Doom concept has been done to death? Well, it has, but Hexen, the sequel to Heretic, is still a great game. The graphics are for the most part good, the heinous beasts are chilling, the mazes and puzzles are elaborate, and the game has tons of clever details. Alas, for those folks waiting on Quake (id's upcoming ubergame), Hexen will seem like more of an upgrade than a breakthrough.

It appears as if Raven and id both knew this, and as a result,

Hexen's mazes are much more complex.

Hexen includes numerous bells and whistles, including a role-playing element that lets you choose between three characters: a Warrior, a Cleric, and a Mage. Don't worry—Hexen's still a fast-paced action game, but depending on which persona you select, the game play varies. The items and weapons you find in your travels differ for each character.

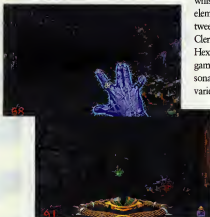
Each character has four appropriate traits. The Warrior has superior speed and armor, but as you might guess, he's no Houdini in terms of magic. On the other hand, the Mage won't break the 100-yard dash record. In the end, however,

no character is better than the others; they simply must work through situations by using their various strengths. As a result, players get three ways to play the game that result in three subtly different experiences. The role-playing addition also enhances multiplayer matches. Team all three up, and you can use each character's specific tal-

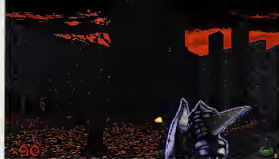
Choose between three different characters.



The Mage can freeze the opposition.



Now beasts will make your skin crawl.



ents depending upon the situation.

Hexen is also more contemplative than Heretic and the Doom. It skews toward adventure-game players who like action rather than action players who want a few easy puzzles.

For starters, it's not level-based, with totals of your kills, secrets, and points at the end of each round. Rather, it's one long bloody adventure in which you teleport from one area to another until the final confrontation. Also, while the cerebral element of Doom concerns strategy in terms of attack or finding a relatively visible door switch, in Hexen things are not so cut-and-dried.

Switches of all sorts are significantly harder to find. Mazes are more difficult to crack. Puzzles have become much more intricate (for example, you must assemble some weapons before you can use them). Hexen will frustrate folks who just want 20 minutes of carnage.

All this aside, Hexen is not that new. While refinements abound, such as enemies who block your blows with shields, improved explosions, doors that do more than slide up, and truly frightening sound effects—the best of any id game—the basic engine, unfortunately, is old news. Don't expect a new standard in terms of graphics or the originality that made Doom such a hit. Hexen is well done, but it is not a truly new experience, especially with so many other

When you go in for the kill hand-to-hand, lunge forward and quickly retreat backward. You'll get more power in your blow, and they'll miss you as you stop away. When attacking with each character's beginning weapon, press Ctrl continuously. The weapon will not deteriorate or run out of power. Use your look-up and look-down feature when ascending or descending stairs. There are often brainless enemies you can take out from the safety of the stairwell. If your health is above 90, don't pick up another blue health vial. You won't receive the full medicinal value of 10 health points. The Cleric is a nice compromise between the Warrior and Mage. He fights well up close and can use magic weapons on beasts from afar. The Warrior and Cleric can chop at bad guys through openings they cannot fit through. Flimsy-looking trees provide good cover against flying beasts.

Hexen
GT Interactive Software
800-434-2637

Developer: id Software, Raven Software
Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486/33, 4MB RAM, MS-DOS 5.0, double-speed CD-ROM drive, Sound Blaster-compatible
List Price: \$50

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ 1/2
SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE: ★ ★ ★ 1/2

Hexen is a good Doom-style game with some new features, but for the most part, it's been done before.

PREVIEW

Wetlands

Many of the genres that get type-cast as kiddie entertainment—including comic books, cartoons, and computer games—in fact boast a long heritage of demonstrating fresh, creative, and artistically mature ideas. Just pick up a graphic novel by Neil Gaiman, watch Stick Figure Theater on MTV's Liquid Television—or plug into New World Computing's Wetlands. This innovative action game melds Rebel Assault-like arcade shooting with offbeat Heavy Metal-esque animation to push the experience in a new direction.

You play John Cole, a classic anti-hero with 5 o'clock shadow hired by the police to hunt down escaped felon Nahj, the only inmate who was not killed or apprehended during a planetary prison break. Your only clue is a cryptic note that reads "Wetlands. April 6." You soon learn that Wetlands is Nahj's underwater planet and that he plans to destroy the world using an apocalyptic device

craft, manipulate different types of weapons, and destroy a critical military machine and industrial infrastructure.

After each mission, elaborate animated cinematics give you the lowdown on the story. Don't look for adventure-style game play, though: You won't be foraging for clues and critical items. The cinematics are simply there to advance the plot. Nonetheless, these sequences may be the coolest animation in any computer game to date. If you liked Full Throttle's quirky graphic-novel style, you'll love Wetlands' cinematic sequences, using "rotoscopic" animation to

create amazingly realistic character movement.

Rotoscoping requires filming real actors against blue screens. Next, animators painstakingly draw characters—frame-by-frame—using the film as a guide. This creates sprites who demonstrate remarkably human movements. Thus, when Cole stumbles into a column of boxes during a space-station attack or grabs a shotgun from a guard's holster and fires, he looks truly lifelike. Evocative Hitchcockian camera angles—including dramatic close-ups—add flavor to the mix. Finally, the game's rendered 3-D backgrounds coexist nicely with the more stylized animated characters.

It's a good thing that Wetlands' arcade sequences look so good. In a market flooded with hot new action titles and a growing number of games that combine multiple forms of game play—arcade action, flight simulation, adventure, and strategy—

Wetlands could appear a bit one-dimensional. Hopefully, New World Computing will pull off a spectacular game, because no one likes getting soaked.

Cinematic closeups give the game a cutting-edge look.



New World Computing hopes Wetlands will follow in the footsteps of such successful action games as Rebel Assault.

Wetlands
New World Computing
800-325-8898

Developer: Hypnotix
Platform: DOS CD
Available: Fall

that harnesses the devastating forces of Mother Nature. Yep, you guessed it: You've got to stop him.

During more than 20 missions, each of which takes you one step closer to your escapee opponent, you'll visit a pair of major cities and dozens of underwater facilities, such as power stations and water filtration plants. The missions may remind you of the arcade sequences in Psygnosis' NovaStorm and LucasArts' Rebel Assault or of the flight sequences in Interplay's Cyberia. This time, though, much of the action transpires underwater. Also, to successfully complete each mission, you'll have to maneuver a variety of deep-sea



Wetlands' beautiful rotoscopic animation creates lifelike character movement.





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Steve Worlofsky, Strategy Plus

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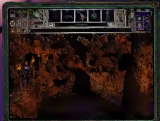
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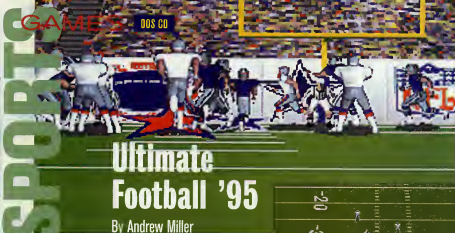
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Ultimate Football '95

By Andrew Miller

Ultimate Football? Nah. Pretty Good Football? You're getting warmer.

MicroProse's Ultimate Football is a solid, fun-to-play game; ironically, that's one of its problems. Over the last couple of years, the market has been flooded with football simulations, and if a game is going to grab your attention, especially away from the likes of Dynamix's Front Page Sports Football, it'd better have something new to offer.

Unfortunately, Ultimate Football '95 is just like all the other football sims on the shelves. About the only thing

Ultimate Football '95 offers that you can't find in other football simulations is software to start your own fantasy football league, and that's just not going to make a big difference to gamers. Just as bad, Ultimate Football '95 can't seem to decide whether it's a straight coaching simulation or an arcade game. Instead, it incorporates both and loses some of its identity as a result.

Like most of its competition, Ultimate Football '95 has been licensed by the NFL Players Association and the NFL itself. However, unlike the other guys, it's been updated so you get all of 1995's players and all 30 teams, including the Carolina and Jacksonville expansion squads. Of course, it's only a matter of time before the competition releases update disks incorporating the new data.

If you don't like any of the real NFL teams, create your own crew in the Team Editor by drafting or trading players. You can even get together with

The game at field level: Too bad you can't tell what's going on.

friends, hold your own draft, create your division, and face each other via a modem. Don't like any of the dozens of built-in plays? Make up your own in the Playbook Editor.

If you do get into a league or start playing a season, be prepared to invest some major time. A regulation game with 15-minute quarters will last an average of two hours.

Fortunately, you can configure the game for shorter quarters, but this time problem could easily have been solved. The game makes you spend

too much time watching huddles and at the line of scrimmage. You can speed the game time by pressing Alt-A while the two teams are in the huddle or at the line of scrimmage, but if you don't have the ball, it jumps the play clock by only five seconds.

The game's controls could use some work, too. Don't bother trying to use a gamepad or joystick; both of mine were too slow to properly control the players. Stick with the far more responsive mouse. When executing plays, your players follow a star that is highlighted beneath them. Move the star forward, they run forward, and so on. It works.

Every football sim tries its best to come up with a unique camera angle. Ultimate Football '95's entry is the "helmet cam," but you can watch from just about any angle you want. If you want to win, however, you'll push F7 for the overhead view and leave it there. The players will be small, but at least you'll be able to see what's happening on both sides of the ball.

The offensive and defensive playbooks for each team are extensive. But for a game that has a formation and play for just about every situation imaginable, there's no special-teams play to block a punt or field goal. If you want to go after a kick, you have to come up with your own play. Fortunately, the play editor makes this relatively easy.

So what's the final word? Ultimate Football '95 is a solid product and would be a welcome addition to any football enthusiast's collection. Just don't expect anything new.



All the camera views look nice, but this is the best way to play.



Don't like the standard plays? Make your own.

Ultimate Football '95
MicroProse
800-879-7529

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486, 4MB RAM, MS-DOS 5.0, VGA, mouse or joystick
List Price: \$39.99

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ 1/2
SETTING STARTER:	★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ 1/2

Ultimate Football '95 is good enough for a 9-7 season, but it gets bounced in the first round of the playoffs.



• Change your plays if you see a weakness in your opponent. You can access the Playbook Editor from the game screen at any time. • This one's almost a cheat: When the opponent is kicking a field goal, you can line up your defensive player in the backfield to block the kick. You have to be in the backfield before they break their huddle, though. • On third and long, the computer quarterback likes to drop way back. A short yardage defense with a blitz will get you the sack almost every time. Just don't keep using the same play, or the computer will learn you and burn you.

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NHL '96

By Steve Klett

Competition in the world of computer hockey has been pretty abysmal lately. Merit's World Hockey earned a major penalty for incompetence, and Accolade is reportedly hanging up its Brett Hull skates to focus on more turf-oriented sports games. So you might think Electronic Arts would be content to let its popular NHL Hockey series rest on its laurels. Think again. Perhaps spurred by Wayne Gretzky lacing up his skates for a new Time

Warner title, EA Sports' NHL '96 represents a major upgrade in graphics, features, and game play—not just updated player stats. The new version should cement its No. 1 standing in the frozen pond genre. And NHL '96 for the PC



Fisticuffs are back. Good or bad? You make the call.



Get used to seeing this score if you play on All-Star level.



Scoring's tough, but this is a good way to start.

NHL '96

Electronic Arts
800-245-4525

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486/66, 8MB RAM, DOS 5.0, double-speed CD-ROM drive, VESA-compatible, SVGA graphics card
List Price: \$59.95



GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

NHL '96 is the best-looking, best-sounding, and most realistic hockey game available for the PC.

• Check aggressively on defense—your teammates are now intelligent enough to back

you up. • There's no easy way to score, but give-and-go passing on the break will increase your odds—as will wrap-arounds and one-timers. • When you're alone in front of the net, double-tap your direction controller at an angle to get a burst of speed, then quickly double-tap down on the controller to stop on a dime. Then take a quick shot at the opposite corner. • If you find hitting the A and B buttons to change lines awkward, try using the F1 through F4 keys instead.

takes a big step toward matching the quality of sports game play formerly found only on console systems such as the Sega Genesis.

NHL '96 contains a number of new features, including eight different camera views, high-resolution graphics, CD-quality audio with stadium-specific organ music, more than 1,000 3-D-rendered player animations, and team videos. Of course, you'll also find every NHL team and player with the requisite statistics, full and abbreviated seasons, and playoff modes. Add faster game play, raucous crowds that actually cheer and razz you when they should, fighting, computer-controlled teammates that set up in the proper positions, and new moves such as give-and-go and one-time passing, and you get the most realistic hockey game available on the PC.

While NHL '96 includes support for as many as four human-controlled players (via joystick and keyboard), the game's best feature is its artificial intelligence, which actually represents a major challenge for even talented solo players. No matter how good you think you were at previous versions—on both the PC and console systems—the days of 82-and-0 seasons are history.

Advanced goalic and defensive artificial intelligence make scoring something to actually celebrate. Even the worst goalies in the league will shut you out if you don't employ radical moves and fancy passing. And just because you make the right move doesn't mean you'll score. Goalies that seem badly out of position will reach back and snatch your blistering slap shot out of the air, and computer-controlled defensive players will do anything to keep you away from the net.

But don't get me wrong. While it may be close, NHL '96 is not perfect. Its 3-D rink is beautiful—with reflective ice that builds up scars during a period and sports advertisements along the boards—but the players are still blocky and pixelated even on the highest graphical setting. And you'll need plenty of horsepower if you want to play on those top-end detail settings. Even on a Pentium 75 with 8MB of RAM, we had to turn off ice reflections and scarring as well as crowd animation to achieve a playable frame-rate. Also, while they do accurately portray the look and feel of a hockey game, the camera angles can be disorienting and often lose track of the puck in the corners and along the boards.

In light of the game's overall quality, though, these are minor complaints. Put simply, NHL '96 is a must-have for hockey fans and sports-game fans.

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Acclaim
ENTERTAINMENT INC.

FIFA '96

By Bill Meyer

For the past year or so, the best soccer game you could buy wasn't for the PC; it was EA Sports' FIFA Soccer for 3DO. Now the PC has something to brag about in terms of old-world football, and—surprise, surprise—it's EA Sports' FIFA '96 for the PC.

What many people figured couldn't be done on the PC without faster processors and 3-D accelerators has happened here. In Super VGA mode, FIFA '96

looks every bit as good as its 3DO cousin. The new game also offers more than 60 official national squads and every team from 11 international leagues, including those from Germany, Brazil, and Colombia. Unlike the 3DO FIFA, you won't see the names of game designers impersonating soccer gods.

Every player of the more than 600 available is an actual professional from a current roster. You'll even hear their names or names called out during play. Only the players' real-world stats are missing, replaced instead with a rating score and an appropriate skill level.

FIFA '96
Electronic Arts
800-245-4525

Developer: Extended Play Productions
Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486/66, 8MB RAM, DOS 5.0, double-speed CD-ROM drive, Super VGA
List Price: \$49.95



SAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

Amazing graphics, an unbelievable number of teams and players, and new player moves and set plays make FIFA '96 king of the PC soccer games.



FIFA '96's Super VGA graphics really bring international matches to life.

Folks with Pentiums will drool over the game's new Super VGA mode, which does not sacrifice fast play. The frame rate is amazing considering the extensive camera switches, player detail, and lifelike player animations. Still, 486 owners aren't left on the sidelines and shouldn't be disappointed by the VGA mode, which looks only slightly inferior to the 3DO version. To cap off the game's great looks, you get a variety of quality sound effects, including chanting fans, and a considerable amount of lively

and varied play-by-play.

While the graphics and sheer number of players and teams are pretty mind-boggling, developer Extended Play Productions didn't stop there. Now you can also choose between Semi-Pro and Pro play, which affects matches considerably. On Pro, not only is the competition tougher and smarter, but



FIFA '96's virtual stadiums are a sight to behold.

human error becomes a factor. Even the greats like Baggio will make lousy passes now and then. However, in Pro, you can also take advantage of open space, commanding one player to lob a ball into the open field while another runs onto it. Choose Semi-Pro, and every pass will go right to your teammates' feet before they blast less realistic, yet enjoyable banana shots. There is also a Practice section, where you work on your offense and defense, try out set plays, scrimmage, and even practice your penalty shots.

The developers also beefed up the game play by adding backward drop passes (perfect in the goal box), immediate pass-backs, long balls, and 180-degree spins into dynamic half- and full-volleys. FIFA '96 also lets you run actual plays (based on the give-and-go and called up with button combinations) within the action or during set situations such as throw-ins, corner kicks, and free kicks. Of course, you can still sprint, slide-tackle, shove, elbow, head, and bicycle kick.

Finally, the game's elegant interface is worthy of high praise. Each screen is artfully designed and easy to understand. Setting up Friendly, League, Tournament, or Playoff games and maneuvering through team scores is no problem.

Still, FIFA '96 is more an arcade game than a simulation. (Some players seem to possess inhuman speed and endurance, for example.) Just the same, FIFA '96's seemingly limitless number of teams and players, graphics flair, and capabilities will make it hard for any sports fan to pass up.



With more than 60 actual teams from 11 international leagues, you'll have lots of matches to play.



S to you. • Don't over-commit your defenders and get them out of position. Let the opposition come to you. • Think forward, backward, and lateral. Your record will suffer if you depend solely on the long ball. • Passes on the ground will not travel inhuman distances as in the 3DO version—and they won't always go directly to a player's feet. • Find a player traveling up the sideline or center and aim a lob pass just beyond him into the open space. Then, immediately select him and chase down the ball. • If you get the ball halfway into your opponent's side, hold down the sprint button and make a burst for the goal box in the direction of a teammate. As you pass him and draw an opposing defender, perform a drop pass to your teammate to give him a shot. • When crossing the ball near the opposition's goalbox, look for players who are at a 45-degree angle from you. Defenders will move parallel to you, leaving trailing teammates open for shots.

second-guessing refs and snarfing down pretzels is nothin'.
try making 300 critical calls in
under 20 seconds each while
answering to a side of beef.



SUPER BOWL XXXI SWEEPSTAKES

TRY THIS ONE:

A Redskin punt touches a 49er blocker downfield. A Redskin picks up the ball and runs into the end zone.

Redskins' ball; at spot of recovery

Redskins' ball; after 5 yd. penalty
from spot of recovery

TD Redskins

49ers' ball; at spot of recovery

What's the call? The right answer could land you and a friend in Arizona next January for Super Bowl XXX.

Hint: The correct answer is printed on the NFL Instant Replay packages found at your local software retailer.



If you're an indecisive twit, move on. NFL Instant Replay's the real thing. Over 300 full-motion video NFL plays on PC CD-ROM, narrated

by Pat Summerall. But it's not enough to be right. You've got to be fast. Pitted against the clock or a buddy, choose the right answer and move through the regular season, playoffs and into the Super Bowl round. Dispute a ruling? Consult the complete NFL rule book that's included in hypertext form. But why? You're a walking rule book, right?

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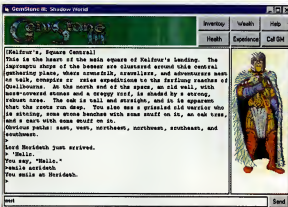


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GemStone III

By Barry Brenesal



Creating a character is quick and easy.

Choose a profession to suit your personality.

GemStone III may look like a throwback to an earlier gaming age, but the people you meet here are modern-day gamers like yourself.

Who needs artificial intelligence? Today's online multiuser games deliver the real thing. You can visit a fantasy world along with thousands of other people simultaneously, interacting with them as you go about your daily

business—casting spells, slaying monsters, and hopefully buying that expensive, enchanted weapon. If that sounds exciting, then make a baseline for GemStone III.

Currently found on GEnie and America Online (with future plans for Prodigy), GemStone III plants you in the land of Elandia, where magic and reality are cunningly woven into a shimmering online environment. GemStone's eight professional classes draw upon ten spell circles and dozens of skills to face the challenges

that beset players daily. You'll find guilds and houses to join, tasks to complete, and items to buy, sell, and trade. The GemStone universe is an interactive one, in all senses of the word. But it's not a graphical world—GemStone III is an almost purely text-based game.

You will find a spirit of cooperation. Unlike many similar multiuser games, you won't have to worry about being killed by player assassins in search of loot. Not that there isn't conflict, but *survival* in GemStone is a plural term; it implies parties whose members help one another and advance through the ranks together.

That help is necessary, because GemStone's GMs (GameMasters) have designed many imaginative monsters to fight in wonderfully descriptive environments. There are hooded figures that dispel your carefully acquired defensive enchantments and stone sentinels that use glowing circles to heal themselves while they attack. And these beings are smart: Drop an enchanted broadsword near a monster, and it will grab the weapon and turn it against you.

You'll also find difficult puzzles to solve and a huge landscape to explore. Even more interesting, Elandia's living inhabitants include some of the most creative role-players in any universe. Other Elandians are just delightful people—simpler, text-based versions of their real-life personas, perhaps, but nonetheless wonderful companions.

GemStone's one real weakness is lack of good plotting. GM-directed "events" (like mysterious visitors and unusual quests) occasionally stall, or are sometimes abandoned without resolution. The GMs also struggle to involve large numbers of online players in events, often turning them into activities for only the most advanced inhabitants. However, similar charges can be laid at the doorstep of most multiuser online games—and should be expected in interactive network gaming, which is currently less a settled genre than a wide-open frontier.

In any case, for balance, depth of play, variety of experience, excellent scripting, and its human dimension, GemStone III takes second place to no other computer game anywhere. Buy a ticket and try it out.

Go to the Town Square when you first arrive. You'll most likely get free assistance from game veterans there.

GemStone's "newbie nights" let recent arrivals receive extra consideration. These nights are usually on Tuesdays, but check with your online service for further information.

Each profession has its specialists, so if you create a bard, try getting a higher-level bard to give you advice.

Don't attack anyone you see in town, even if it's only a computer-controlled character wandering in the background. You'll get jailed and fined by the local constable.

GemStone III

America Online,
800-203-3200;
GEnie, 800-638-9636
Developer: Simutronics



GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

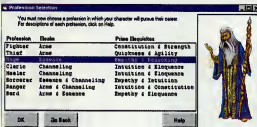
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

GRAPHICS: N/A

SOUND CHECK: N/A

VALUE: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A brilliantly detailed multiuser fantasy universe—even without graphics.



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3D Lemmings

Lemmings are like lima beans: some people love 'em; some people hate 'em. If you fall in the former category, you'll have to take a look at 3D Lemmings, the latest in the long line of Lemmings games.

In some ways, 3D Lemmings goes back to the basics. Gone are the myriad lemming races such as the ninjas and beach burns that populated Lemmings 2: The Tribes. Gone are the tools and fighting of The Lemmings Chronicles. These lemmings are the original blue-bodied, green-haired guys.

Oh, there are some new features, such as a "turning" skill, that causes a selected lemming to act like a school crossing guard. You can also highlight a lemming with an arrow, then give him a skill by simply clicking on the proper icon. It's a great

way to pick a specific lemming out of a crowd. And in an annoying commercialization, some levels are even "sponsored" by candy maker Jelly Belly.

But the biggest change, of course, is that these lemmings now live out their short, meaningless lives in a 3-D world of depth and distance. Floating cameras give you infinite ways to view the 90 colorful levels. You can even use a Virtual Lemming mode to get a lemming's-eye view.

Unfortunately, the move to 3-D makes an appealingly easy-to-play game frustratingly difficult. While earlier games could get fast and furious as you attempted to lead your charges safely through the levels, at least it was fairly easy to keep track of the little guys. In 3-D, lemmings are often blocked from view or wander out of camera range. As a result, it pays to pause the game and set up your four cameras as soon as possible if you want any hope of saving the little guys.

Still, 3D Lemmings can be fun once you figure things out. Better practice or you could be responsible for mass lemmicide.

—Christopher Lindquist



3D Lemmings gives you a lemmings'-eye view of the action.

3D Lemmings

Sony Interactive/Pygmalion
415-695-5683

Developer: Clockwork Games

Platform: DOS CD, DOS

Requires: 486/50, 4MB RAM,

Sound Blaster-compatible, mouse

Street Price: \$39.95



GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ 1/2

GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★

GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ 1/2

SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★

VALUE: ★ ★ ★ 1/2

3D brings a whole new look—and a new level of difficulty—to the classic Lemmings puzzle games.

Werewolf Vs. Comanche 2.0

If Novalogic's Werewolf Vs. Comanche 2.0 sounds too good to be true, trust your instincts.

Werewolf Vs. Comanche is essentially two games in one box. You get one CD-ROM with 30 missions featuring the Russian KA-50 Kamov Werewolf helicopter and another disc with 60 missions featuring the American Boeing Sikorsky RAH-66 Comanche. Then there's the added bonus of 30 network/modem missions that allow you to fly the two copters against each other or as a team with as many as eight other pilots. Sounds good, right? Read on.

Built with the same graphics engine used for Novalogic's lackluster Armored Fist, both Werewolf and Comanche start out behind the eight ball. Each game includes some nice effects—such as translucent smoke that rises from burned-out hulks on the battlefield. However, the terrain and enemies are so pixelated that it's hard to discern exactly what's

burning and what you're shooting at. Aww hell, you really didn't need that wingman anyways, did you?

Then there's the, ahem, "realistic" flight models of these two awesome machines. While the model does convey a sense of flight, it's more like an arcade ride than a true flight-sim experience. The Comanche feels a bit more responsive than the Werewolf, but other than that they fly identically. Novalogic could have at least included more realism as an option.

Let's not even go into the Super Nintendo-quality music. If all you want is a cheap way to start blowing away everything in sight with a few of your friends, check out Werewolf Vs. Comanche. Otherwise, there are far better helicopter sims. Did someone say Interactive Magic's Apache?

—Steve Klett

Werewolf Vs. Comanche 2.0

Novalogic
800-245-4525

Platform: DOS CD

Requires: 386, VGA

List Price: \$59.99



GAME PLAY: ★ ★

GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★

GRAPHICS: ★ ★

SOUND CHECK: ★ ★

VALUE: ★ ★

Only flexible network play keeps Werewolf Vs. Comanche from a complete crash and burn.

Nice explosion, but did it just kill my wingman?



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"Exotic locales, cliff-hanging situations, fast-paced story-
telling, fascinating characters, diabolical puzzles. *The Riddle
of Master Lu* seems to have it all." — *PC Gamer*



**SANCTUARY
WOODS**

Dagger's Rage

Dagger's Rage, a top-down-view action game, might have been state of the art for Christmas 1991, but in 1995 it trails the pack in almost every respect. Only the fact that it runs under Windows—including Windows 95—makes it of interest at all.

Dagger's Rage

Microforum
800-465-2323

Platform: Win/Win 95 CD
Requires: 486 OX/50, 8MB RAM, Windows 3.1, local-bus Super VGA, double-speed CD-ROM drive, Sound Blaster-compatible
List Price: \$49.95

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ 1/2

GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★

GRAPHICS: ★ ★

SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ 1/2

VALUE: ★ ★

Take away the adventure-game trap-pings and you're left with a slow, dull action game—but hey, it's Windows.

Dagger's Rage dresses up the action in a limited adventure-game setting. It's the year 2524, and you're Kurt Kaso, a former military hotshot in the Vek wars, now flying for the Mercenary Pilots Guild. Your old commander recruits you to see what's really behind stepped-up pirate activity in your sector—and rumors that the Veks may not have been thoroughly defeated.

You take on various assignments escorting cargo ships and blasting

pirates in an attempt to earn credits, work your way up in the Guild, and discover the truth. Along the way you can boost your armaments, buy new ships, and stock up on ammunition.

But the heart of the game consists of two-dimensional action sequences pitting your ship against flotillas of bad guys. Smallish ships fly over a variety of space and terrain backgrounds. You'll face several different types of pirate ships, but the action remains pretty much the same from sequence to sequence.

Roughly drawn cut scenes and maps link the space battles, but offer precious little information. Your radar always shows three enemies approaching, for example, no matter how many ships are attacking. And except for ships you may be escorting, you always fly alone; the concept of wingmen is far beyond this game.

Compared to any of today's top-of-the-line titles, Dagger's Rage seems like a throwback to a less entertaining era.

—Fredric Paul



The top-down view lets you see your enemies.

Heroes of Might & Magic

This isn't the first time we've reviewed Heroes of Might & Magic. Back in January 1995 (page 96), I wrote about the pre-release version. Unfortunately, the game was delayed several months and is just now hitting the streets. Was it worth the wait? In a word, yes.

Heroes of Might & Magic is a game of turn-based strategic warfare set in a Might & Magic-like fantasy universe full of thieves, knights, orcs, and wizards. To win, you must acquire ten valuable resources (sulfur, gold, gems, and so on) with which you can purchase the services of heroes and monster armies. Along the way, you may find powerful artifacts and encounter as many as three clever computerized opponents simultaneously.

Choose from among 17 stand-alone confrontations or a campaign of 16 successive "worlds." The 33 resulting maps don't change from game to game, but everything else—the location of objects, monsters, heroes and spells—does. You can

also reconfigure your opponents' intelligence levels.

Each scenario contains many paths to success—and failure. For example, you get to decide what buildings to purchase for each castle you own, and what monster armies to build. Do you buy a knightly hero with defensive advantages and better morale during battle, or go with a spell-casting sorceress? Choose well, because each choice affects the final confrontation with your surviving enemies.

The game's visuals are great, including stunning Super VGA—though with limited animation. Heroes of Might & Magic's music is just as good, consisting of a series of well-crafted, Baroque-influenced compositions that I'd listen to on their own. Not only that, the game now includes a good online help system that was missing from the earlier version, making the game even easier to play. This winner should please strategy and fantasy fans alike.

—Barry Brenesal

Heroes of Might & Magic
New World Computing
800-325-8898

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486/33, 8MB RAM, DOS 5.0, Super VGA, double-speed CD-ROM drive
List Price: \$69.95

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

VALUE: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

An endlessly replayable, great-looking strategy-based conquest of fantasy lands.



Heroes of Might & Magic puts a strategy twist on a classic role-playing game.

Crashing, Burning, And Going To Extremes

By Peter Olafson

Wipeout

This is virtual reality without the thousand-dollar glasses. I am not in the family room; I am on the wrong side of the TV screen. My PlayStation and I are one. Wipeout is in the house and, for the moment, nothing else matters.

This hovercraft racing game from Psygnosis has an almost hypnotic smoothness as you whip around curves, over jumps, and through tunnels. I know I've played this same game a dozen times before in various incarnations, but never so seamlessly executed. The game's terrain has an amazing sense of solidity to it, and you can't help but feel like part of the surroundings.

And, for all the graphics and all the speed, that's what Wipeout comes down to: the feeling of participation. The room around me just receded. All I saw was the curve ahead of me and my

hovercraft. And I was right there with it. (Sony Interactive/Psygnosis; 415-655-8000; street price \$49-\$59)

Platform: PlayStation

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Destruction Derby

Be honest. In your heart of hearts, you don't really care how well video-game cars handle. You want to know how well they crash.

Well, Destruction Derby for the PlayStation is an ode to how they crash—and they do it very well, thank you very much.

The developer, Reflections—the power behind so many of Psygnosis's great Amiga games—has set its sights on this uniquely perverse (and uniquely American) celebration of automotive violence, and the result is very nearly

perfect. You drive your car—backwards, if you want it to last long—within a circular arena. You participate in very realistic shattering collisions with other cars. You hand out and take damage—your textured car all the while looking progressively more beaten up and

With Captain Quazar, 3DO owners finally get a great shooter.

handling more poorly.

The last car that still moves, wins. By then, the others will be spouting oily, black smoke.

Within those restrictions, Destruction Derby is flawless. Reflections combines trackside realism (with battered and smoking cars everywhere), rigorous detail in the effect collisions have on handling, and photo-realistic scenery for an utterly persuasive experience. I've never been to a demolition derby in my life. I never wanted to. Now, I'm planning on adding monster truck rallies and roller derbies to our weekend agenda. (Note to my wife: Just kidding.)

The trouble is that the appeal of destruction for its own sake has its limits. (Hence, I suppose, the inclusion of a handful of stock-car speedways.) However, an assortment of stunt tracks à la Hard Drivin', would be a nice addition. Imagine the possibilities. (Sony Interactive/Psygnosis; 415-655-8000; street price \$49-\$59)

Platform: PlayStation

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Captain Quazar

At last, a really fun shoot-'em-up for 3DO. Captain Quazar is American Laser Games' Mazer (beaten with a stick last issue) done right—an Escape from the Planet of Robot Monsters for the '90s. Everything blows up in this joyful isometric arcade game—walls, buildings, rockets, crates, drums—and almost everything looks great

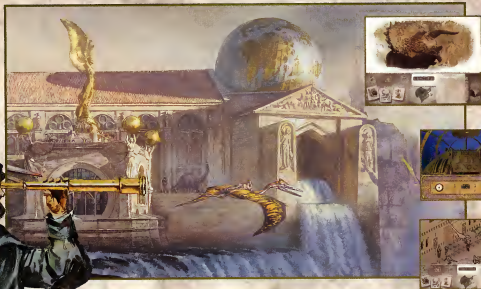
continued on page 172



Relieve some stress with Destruction Derby.



DARE TO DREAM



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An adventure for anyone with an imagination.

"Looks like gotta-have Christmas software"
USA Today, Mike Snider



INTERACTIVE

DINOTOPIA

continued from page 170

while doing so. A completed level is loaded with evidence of the havoc you've wrought. (Most of the little dead enemies leave tombstones behind.)

The captain, a great blond lug with a Leno-on-steroids chin, roams around making occasional stupid sounds as he collects ammo and health powerups, extracts teleporter codes from survivors, and just burns everything to the ground. Delightful. (Studio 3DO; 800-336-3506; \$59.95)

Platform: 3DO

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

WingArms

Crash and Burn Dept.: WingArms appears to be Sega's attempt to bring to the Saturn a texture-mapped arcade flight sim in the style of Ace Combat for the PlayStation. If so, lotsa luck. The planes in this World War II-era mission-based sim do loops but can't bank at more than 45 degrees. In head-on collisions, they don't detonate, but bounce off each other. And complex scenery appears to lose about 95 percent of its detail (not to mention its shape) at a distance. Plus, do you think the intro should possibly simulate something other than the attack on Pearl Harbor? (Sega of America; 800-872-7342; street price \$40 to \$60)

Platform: Saturn

Rating: ★ ★

ESPN Extreme Games

Imagine the 3DO version of Road Rash—still the paramount lunatic driving experience—imbued with some of the obstacle-course sensibility of Rise of the Triad, and you'll have a sense of ESPN Extreme Games for the PlayStation.

You choose rollerblade, land luge, skateboard, or mountain bike and then literally claw your way through five tracks. (Punches and kicks are sensibly apportioned to the four Shift buttons.) Along the way, you can raise cash toward upgrades, gain ranking points,

and generate some neat surprises by following a course through colored gates.

The speed is good, the scenery often brilliant—the game has an enormous depth of field—and the game seems to issue sounds specific to everything you can hurt yourself on. (I ran into a newspaper machine and was startled to hear a hollow "thunk.") And the concept is clever: If Sony meant to separate it from Road Rash 3DO, it has done so.

Unfortunately, for all the commendable components, Extreme Games doesn't quite hang together. It lacks the feverishness of a racing game—the track design is wanting, and the racers don't fill the screen well—and the inspiration of a 3-D action game. It's not extreme; it's more like middle of the road. But that's not necessarily an uncomfortable place to be. (Sony Computer Entertainment; 415-655-8000; \$49-\$59 street price)

Platform: PlayStation

Rating: ★ ★ ★

V.R. Virtua Racing

V.R. Virtua Racing for the Saturn subscribes to a much lower graphical spec and manages to be more fun than its Extreme competitor. This conversion of

the legendary Sega 32X game is still polygon-based, but now there are a lot more of them. So you'll notice extra scenery as you speed around the tracks. And more cars. And more tracks. And more of the little memorable touches that made Virtua Racing a classic to begin with.

The biggest plus here, however, is a progressive structure that allows you to work your way up from putt-putt go-karts up to the big rigs. This gives the original open-ended game—in which you could race the way you wanted when you wanted—a new-found staying power (i.e., there's something to fight for).

Then again, if you're going to tamper with a classic, you'd better have classic material on hand, and this is where V.R. falls down a little. Most of the new tracks don't have the drive-them-in-your sleep quality of the originals. (The urban track is a notable exception.) However, they're at least adequate, and V.R. is more than that: It's a solid and surprisingly entertaining update. (Time Warner Interactive; 800-482-3766; \$59.99)

Platform: Saturn

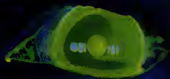
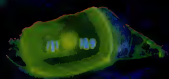
Rating: ★ ★ ★ 1/2

continued on page 174

A classic's made even better with V.R. Virtua Racing for the Saturn.



WARNING: The Host of This Game is *NOT* User Friendly.



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Flying Nightmares is the first real 3D flight sim.

continued from page 172

Zero Divide

Zero Divide takes Tekken to a "Big and Tall" shop, but neglects to stop at the fitting room on the way to the checkout counter.

This 3-D fighting game for the PlayStation gives us huge, complex, and unwieldy robotic characters that are ultimately too large and too busy to take much pleasure in. The designers were probably just trying to push the technology harder—more polygons in motion—but it's like watching giant lobsters fighting with gardening tools.

The up-side is that the combatants are equipped with an absolutely staggering array of moves. Unraveling their complexities is almost a game in itself. (Zoom; \$70 to \$90 for Japanese import)

Platform: PlayStation

Rating: ★ ★ ★

Flying Nightmares

The good news is that 3DO finally has a real flight sim. (VR Stalker was an arcade flying game in flight-sim duds.) Flying Nightmares finds you in the cockpit of England's versatile Harrier jump jet on a fictional campaign to liberate an island nation. You'll have to worry about carrier landings, stall speed, engine nozzle angle, and all the cockpit housekeeping tasks that arm-

chair pilots know and love.

The bad news is that, for a 3DO game, there's nothing much special about it. The frame rate is good enough that you don't even notice it, and base, carrier, and building graphics do look good. (You can even see the surf.) But the ground texturing and effects like smoke and explosions are rather modest. The command system is rigorous—requiring simultaneous key presses. Plus, on more than one occasion I noticed the horizon quivering when the plane wasn't. What's that about? (Domark; 800-366-3506; \$54.95)

Platform: 3DO

Rating: ★ ★ 1/2

BattleSport

BattleSport, eh? C'mon, folks, fess up. This Studio 3DO game is essentially an update of the LucasArts 8-bit classic BallBlazer (and its 16-bit relative, Master Blazer), with the goal in the center of the arena instead of at the ends. The ball looks the same. The missile-throwing tanks that lug them around look the same. And it's still basically a good time—especially with two players.

However, that said, it's also a rather confining game: You grab the ball; you throw the ball; you blow the blue bejesus out of your opponent to make him fumble the ball. A multiplayer team capability would have given this game

a strategic element that could have made it unforgettable. (Studio 3DO; 800-336-3506; \$59.95)

Platform: 3DO

Rating: ★ ★ ★

Power Serve 3D Tennis

Fault! Power Serve 3D Tennis for the PlayStation looks good. It's configurable right down to the sex of the umpire who calls the shots. It offers a range

of lobs and spins and just-fictitious-enough opponents (Andy Legacy?) who fall to their textured polygonal knees when they lose—which is not often.

In full 3-D mode, where you see the court from the player's point of view, I found it very difficult to connect fuzzy ball with catty gut. There's no practice mode to allow you to learn the basic moves in a non-competitive situation. Nor is there an option for a career or season play. A shame. This looked like an ace. (Ocean of America; 408-289-1200; \$59.95)

Platform: PlayStation

Rating: ★ ★

Blue Lightning

The Jag's 16-bit processor must be running this one. Blue Lightning, the first Jaguar CD game, is an odd choice for the CD bundle: It was ported up from the handheld Lynx, and it shows. This nondescript rewrite of Afterburner offers a distinctly 2-D version of 3-D, with dull text screens and a consuming sameness. A second bundled game—a PC port called Vid Grid, a trifle that allows you to unscramble recent music videos—is actually a better demonstration of the unit's potential. (Atari; 800-462-8274; bundled with Jaguar CD)

Platform: Jaguar CD

Rating: ★



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MIDWAY



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World-breaking, state-of-the-art Silicon Graphics technology brings you multiple

viewing angles plus a super-high resolution of up to 1024 x 768 running at 60 frames per second. (Tech-speak for the best graphics in a game ever.)

Scrolling? With Pro-Pinball, it's history. You see ALL of the action ALL of the time - pretty handy when you're playing six balls simultaneously, all shooting

around the table just as nature intended.

And with twenty great soundtracks, interactive speech, genuine mechanical sound effects plus a host of play modes and hidden features, the reality is this:

Pinball novices will be just as spellbound as pinball wizards.

empire
INTERACTIVE

3-D Starts to Get Real

For years, game developers, architects, and engineers have used high-end 3-D graphics-acceleration cards to help their computers create and manipulate spectacular images. However, these cards often cost thousands of dollars and were of no use to gamers just looking for a better way to play.

That's beginning to change. Over the past year, specialized computer-chip makers have joined forces with

gates that make up the larger polygons of a 3-D object, and texture mapping, which applies a two-dimensional image on top of the rendered object. In addition, some cards provide extra features, such as perspective-correct texture mapping, which makes textures move more realistically as your point of view changes on the 3-D scene, and anti-aliasing, which helps eliminate the jagged, "sawtooth" edges that can mar images.

To make sure you have games to play on this new technology, 3-D-card companies are scrambling to make sure their products will work with games created using standard 3-D libraries—collections of predefined, three-dimensional objects that developers can simply incorporate into their games, saving themselves the time and money required to create them from scratch—from Argonaut, Criterion, and Microsoft.

Windows 95 should make things even easier by providing a common application programming interface (API) for all card makers who want to write Win 95 drivers. That way, any game maker who writes a Win 95 game can build in support for 3-D acceleration, and Win 95 takes care of telling the game what kind of features the card includes.

Not So Fast...

However, when *Electronic Entertainment* talked with game developers familiar with the new cards, they revealed four key points that, at least for now, show it's not a simple matter of "build it and they will come."

For starters, the card with the best performance and largest feature set may not be the one that becomes the 3-D standard. Instead, the card or chip maker that makes it easiest for game developers to port their existing titles to support 3-D will stand the best chance of succeeding. According to Colin

Boswell, Technical Director at Domark Software, a company busily writing games for nearly every 3-D card in development, game makers look for three attributes in a 3-D board: "Does it make the game look better? Does it make the game run faster? And how easy is it to accomplish those two things?"

Second, it appears that better technology is just around the corner. By early 1996, the first entries in the 3-D chip market may be brushed aside by new contenders with more power and better support. Game developers are already talking about chips such as Rendition's Vérté (which should appear first on a board by card maker Number Nine), which not only sports incredible performance, but also was designed from the ground up to make life easy on software makers. One early coup: id software has ported a prototype of its upcoming Quake to support a sample board using Vérté hardware.

Even this current round of cards is only the tip of the iceberg for their makers. Yamaha, NVIDIA, and 3D Labs are all working on faster, more feature-rich, and less ex-



Diamond Edge 3D

pensive versions of today's offerings.

Third, no one is sure where 3-D is really going. At press time, Microsoft had not yet finalized its Direct 3D standard for Windows 95, leaving game makers guessing about what plans to make for 3-D games in the 1996 holiday season.

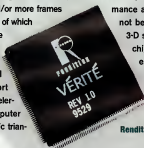
Fourth, many gamers won't see enough performance improvements with the current products to justify buying a \$250-\$350 card. If you think a 3-D card is going to turn your 486 into a Sega Saturn, you may be disappointed.

Creative 3D Blaster

graphics-card manufacturers to create a new generation of consumer 3-D acceleration cards. The first cards are just hitting the market now, and there's no established 3-D standard yet, but it's clear that 3-D is the gaming wave of the future. While the new cards may not have all the features of their more expensive siblings, they've got what it takes to provide an enhanced game experience for the average Joe who's got about \$300 to spend.

3-D cards are powered by special hardware designed to manipulate the pieces that make up the 3-D objects you see on the screen, leaving your system's main processor free to do other things. The result is higher resolution, more detailed graphics, and/or more frames per second of animation—all of which make for a smoother, more realistic look.

That hardware comes into play in several ways. All of the new cards support polygon or "rendering" acceleration, which lets the computer more quickly draw the basic trian-



Rendition Vérté Chip

Here and Now

Despite the roadblocks, though, the fact remains that both hardware and software makers want 3-D acceleration, and they will find a way to get it. Microsoft will solidify Direct 3D, chip makers will find ways to support it, and game makers will work hard to let their wares take advantage of it.

The pull of 3-D (and the funding supplied by 3-D card makers) is already strong enough to lure Looking Glass Technologies, Papyrus, Domark, Interplay, Electronic Arts, and others into building games that directly support today's various 3-D cards. Just don't expect an instant flood of new games that support your card of choice. Indeed, many of the first titles will simply be acceleration-enabled versions of old favorites, such as Magic Carpet, NASCAR Racing, and Descant.

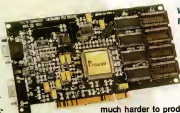
To see how they look and play, *E2* checked out a quartet of the first 3-D cards to hit the market: the 3D Blaster from Creative Labs, the Diamond Edge 3D from Diamond Multimedia, Western Digital's Paradise Tasmania, and the Matrox MGA Millennium. All are either available now or due to hit store shelves before year's end.

We found that while each vendor showed off impressive demos, it's still a bit early for the average gamer to go and buy one of these new toys. Unless you're an early-adopter technology junkie who has \$300 burning a hole in your pocket, take a deep breath and wait a few months. Then, when things settle down a bit, you'll be able to rev up your games with a little more confidence.

Creative 3D Blaster

At first glance, Creative's approach to the 3D Blaster may seem a bit odd. For starters, PCI-bus Pentium owners are going to have to wait until next year. The first version of the 3D Blaster is VESA local-bus only and targeted at 486 owners who aren't quite ready to dump their PC in favor of a hotter processor.

The plan begins to make sense when you consider that Pentium owners already have a pretty decent 3-D platform, acceleration or no. The Pentium has a speedy math coprocessor



Western Digital
Paradise Tasmania 3D

that delivers far better 3-D performance than does the best 486. A 3-D accelerator would have to work

much harder to produce dramatic improvement on a Pentium.

The 3D Blaster plugs into a standard VESA bus slot and connects to your existing graphics card with an external connector. For around \$350, it comes complete with a six-pack of 3-D enabled games: Magic Carpet Plus, Flight Unlimited, NASCAR Racing, Cyberbrawl, Balz Out!, and Azrael's Tear. Creative says you can expect around 20 games that support the 3D Blaster by this Christmas.

Our look at some early titles for the 3D Blaster reveals fairly impressive performance. Blaster-ready Magic Carpet and NASCAR Racing moved at about twice their normal frame rates in high-res mode, resulting in a much more pleasing—and playable—game. However, unlike the competition, the 3D Blaster is based on a chip from 3-D Labs' current Glint chip that only supports a maximum resolution of 640-by-480.

Still, you can't sell the Creative Labs name short when it comes to convincing developers to write games for its hardware. So buyers of the 3D Blaster ought to be able to find some new titles. But if you expect to drop one of these cards into your PC and turn your 486 into a high-res PlayStation, think again. (Creative Labs; 800-998-1000; PC, \$350)

Diamond Edge 3D

Diamond is the largest graphics-card vendor on the planet. You have to take seriously any 3-D product it makes, and the Edge 3D is a serious product.

The Edge 3D takes an "all-in-one" approach to multimedia. The Edge uses a chip from NVIDIA that combines fast 2-D Windows 95 acceleration, wavetable sound, a digital controller interface, full-motion video

acceleration, and fast 3-D performance using a unique "quadratic texture map" technique—all on a single card. In fact, the combination is so powerful that Sega has decided to port Saturn games such as Panzer Dragoon and Virtua Fighter Remix to run on PCs equipped with the Edge 3D. But while all this sounds great, there are a few flaws.

First, Diamond is taking the opposite tack of Creative and bringing out the Edge 3D for PCI-bus systems first. That means 486 owners will have to wait until next year—if ever.

Second, the Edge 3D is a pure Windows 95 accelerator designed to work best with Windows 95 games. Some Windows games that will support the card directly include Domark's Absolute Zero and Interplay's Descant: Destination Saturn. But if you want to play a DOS game, you'd better leave your old sound card right where it is because the board doesn't include DOS Sound Blaster support.

Third, some developers say that programming games to take best advantage of the

Edge 3D is anything but easy.

The card's quadratic approach to 3-D runs against the grain of many existing 3-D game engines, meaning it can take more time to port titles. And most game makers don't

have much time to spare.

Finally, it remains to be seen how the Edge 3D and its NVIDIA architecture will fit in with Microsoft's 3-D plans. Diamond and NVIDIA say they are working hard to make it easier for developers to port their games and that they are working with Microsoft to guarantee solid support for their products in Windows 95, but only time will tell for sure. (Diamond Multimedia; 800-468-5846; PC, \$249-\$300)

Western Digital Paradise Tasmania 3D

Western Digital is taking yet another approach. It plans on simultaneously releasing its Paradise Tasmania 3D—based on Yamaha's YGV612 3D accelerator chip—in

continued on page 181



Matrox MGA Millennium

GUARANTEED to make your skin crawl.

Play ENTOMORPH: PLAGUE OF THE DARKFALL™
and you'll never be the same...

256-color SVGA



Welcome to SSF's WORLD OF ADEN, a vast new fantasy role-playing game world, where ingenuity and imagination reign supreme! It is the time of the Darkfall, a malevolent plague that threatens to corrupt every living thing in the land. ENTOMORPH: PLAGUE OF THE DARKFALL finds you in Kyan, where you witness the ghastly power of this virulent evil – *the inhabitants are slowly being transformed into giant insects!*

The horror mounts when you realize you're trapped in Kyan and destined to suffer the same fate as those you've seen skittering into the shadows on six legs.

Time is now your worst enemy. Find the root of these evil transformations while you still can – or drown in the seething sea of insects that is Kyan!

This single-player fantasy action adventure features an intense, branching storyline. Grisly combat with a variety of deadly attack options. Mind-bending puzzles. Treacherous traps. And ENTOMORPH is presented in state-of-the-art high-resolution graphics – with a CD-quality soundtrack that's guaranteed to make your skin crawl!



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both PCI and VESA-bus versions. The card should cost less than the competition, too, hitting the streets at around \$250.

Like the 3D Blaster, the Tasmania attaches to your existing graphics board via an outside cable. Its performance, based on early looks at some compatible games, seems quite good. Of course, this card has its problems, too.

Unlike the other cards, the Tasmania can't handle perspective-correct texture mapping, which can result in a less smooth appearance. Also, Yamaha's list of software supporters is shorter than Diamond's or Creative Labs'. To be sure, Papyrus will support the card with NASCAR Racing, but Domark contributes only the mediocre Tank Commander. The other cards each get one of Domark's more advanced upcoming releases.

Finally, neither Yamaha nor Western Digital can match the influence of Creative and Diamond when it comes to winning the hearts and minds of game developers, so they face an uphill climb to win significant, long-term game-maker support. (Western Digital; 714-932-5000; PC, \$250)

Matrox MGA Millennium

Sometimes being first is good; sometimes it's not. Matrox has been a big player in the high-end, professional 3-D accelerator-card market for years. So when the company announced plans more than a year ago to launch a consumer-priced combination Super VGA and 3-D accelerator card, it stirred up quite a buzz.

Unfortunately, Matrox's first attempt, the Impression, didn't live up to expectations. Oh, it did 3-D acceleration all right, but it supported only Gouraud shading, not the texture mapping needed to make objects look more realistic. Even worse, the card's VGA core offered abysmal performance, making some games practically unplayable.

Now Matrox is back with the MGA Millennium, a \$400 Super VGA, video, and 3-D accelerator card with exceptionally fast 2-D performance. It may prove to be too little, too late on the 3-D side, however. The Matrox card seems to elicit little interest from game developers. In fact, the MGA Multimedia SuperPack contains only a single game. Yes, you guessed it—NASCAR Racing.

So while the MGA Millennium may be a fine card, it simply isn't generating the support necessary to be a real competitor in what should become an ultra-vicious battle. (Matrox; 800-361-1408; \$379)



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Our Multimedia Fantasy

Ties, sweaters, even socks. That's what most of us get for the holidays. But it's not what we really want. Oh, no, what we really wish for is a brand-spanking-new, top-of-the-line multimedia computer.

Well, we can always hope, can't we? But what if Santa or some other generous soul really was going to bring you the ultimate in hot computer hardware? Exactly what would you want?

Well, here's *Electronic Entertainment's* holiday wish list for the hottest, fastest, game-playing-est...um...multimedia-est...er...

Here's what we'd like to get for the holidays. We know, we know, this stuff adds up to almost eight grand. Still, we've been good, and we deserve it!

Powerful Pentium (\$1,400)

First, let's get serious about the processor. A 133MHz Pentium is the only CPU to buy at this point. Oh, sure, the Pentium Pro (a.k.a. Intel's marketing name for the P6) is out and about and flaunting its performance power, but there's some indication that 16-bit software—including some of today's games—may actually run slower on a Pentium Pro than on a fast, old Pentium. It seems unlikely that game makers will be making Pentium Pro-optimized games for some time, so let's stick with the known quantity for now.

Hold Everything (\$1,800)

We've got the processor, now let's add some storage. Enhanced IDE drives are easier to deal

with than SCSI drives, and they don't require drivers that can burn up precious conventional memory, so let's go that route. Hard to believe that 500MB was considered a good starting point just a couple years ago; now 1GB is becoming standard, but we'll double that just to be on the safe side. Even the most glutton PC-entertainment fan will have trouble filling 2 gigs of space before spring. Besides, once you start checking into drives

this big, the prices start dropping to less than 50 cents per megabyte. What a bargain!

We'll make "Out of Memory" errors a thing of the past with 32MB of RAM. But what kind of RAM should you get? These days, all the

hottest machines are using ultra-fast EDO—or "Extended Data Out"—RAM, so we will too. (What makes EDO RAM faster? Normal Dynamic RAM has to be "refreshed," meaning its data must be reloaded, every time the CPU reads it. EDO RAM can retain its data read after read, saving time and boosting overall system performance.)

Cruising CD-ROM Drives (\$500)

Four times? Six times? Nah, let's go all the way to 8X with a CD-ROM drive that is guaranteed not to go out of style until the third millennium. Sure, we may not see much performance improvement in games maximized for older double- and quad-speed drives, but at least we won't spend as much time waiting around for those new games to install.

Great Graphics (\$400)

The truth is that you're unlikely to see much difference in Windows performance among any of today's top graphics accelerator cards. Fast is fast is fast. However, you should be careful to buy a card that will also work well with your DOS games. Some graphics-card manufacturers put all their effort into making an ultra-fast Windows accelerator, then saddle the board with the cheapest VGA core they can find. The result is zip-quick Windows—and DOS games that stay stuck in the mud.

Fortunately, there are good options that do both. The Matrox Millennium offers excellent DOS and Windows performance, and even adds some 3-D and video acceleration as a bonus (see "3-D Starts to Get Real," page 178, for more details). Likewise, the Diamond Stealth 64 delivers admirable performance in both DOS and Windows, although it lacks the Millennium's support for 3-D. We're not picky; we'll take either one. If you really want to be on top of things, go for the 4MB versions to guarantee maximum resolutions and color depth under Windows.

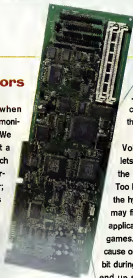
All the Stuff And More

Everything we mention above can be found in your local computer store or via mail order. But if you're interested in more info direct from the manufacturer, give these numbers a call.

Advanced Gravis 800-663-8558
Cambridge SoundWorks 800-367-4434
Creative Labs 800-288-1000
Diamond Multimedia Systems 408-325-7000
Matrox 800-361-1408
Microsoft 800-426-9400
NEC 800-632-4636
ThrustMaster 503-639-3200
US Robotics 800-342-5877

Monster Monitors (\$2,000)

Size matters, particularly when you're talking about computer monitors. The bigger, the better. We just can't live without at least a 21-inch screen with 28 dot-pitch resolution. NEC makes a perfectly lovely 21-inch monitor; any of the name-brand models would make a nice addition to the family. Yeah, we know big screens don't come cheap, but if Santa can slide one down the chimney, we'd certainly appreciate it.



settle for 28.8Kbps until then. Just make sure our modem can be easily upgraded, like those from US Robotics.

As for Digital Simultaneous Voice and Data (DSVD)—which lets you talk and send data over the same line—we love the idea.

Too bad the reality won't live up to the hype for a while. Seems DSVD may find its way into tech-support applications long before it gets into games. The current standard could cause online games to freeze up for a bit during error correction, so all you'd end up saying to your opponent is "What the heck is going on?"

Stupendous Sound (\$600)

If you want to be really happy, General MIDI wavetable audio is a must, as is Sound Blaster compatibility for all our old faithful DOS games.

Did you think that Windows 95 made Sound Blaster compatibility irrelevant? Not so fast. Creative Labs' AWE 32 may not be the newest board on the block, but it is Sound Blaster 16-compatible, and most of the latest DOS games now support the AWE 32 for both digitized sound and MIDI music playback.

The AWE 32 also includes built-in reverb and chorus, plus the ability to add onboard memory to store "sound fonts," or banks of sound different from the standard General MIDI collection. We PC music makers will enjoy having the options.

To make sure this machine is music to our ears, we've gotta have great sounding speakers—a subwoofer is de rigueur. Cambridge SoundWorks' SoundWorks system does justice to music and multimedia. It sounds really good, especially for speakers costing less than \$200. You could spend more, but we don't want to be too greedy.

Wicked Wire Act (\$400)

Modems just keep getting faster, and 33.6Kbps is looking like the next place to be. Oh, the V.34bis or V.394t or whatever they'll call it standard won't be official until next year, so we'll

More than a Mouse (\$150)

Fact is, certain games work better with an old-fashioned mouse, and some just love a trackball. We'll take both. There are plenty to choose from, but the Logitech Trackman Vista is a favorite around here in the trackball arena, while Kensington's four-button, programmable Thinking Mouse would be just the rodent for the rest of the time.



Jumping Joysticks! (\$550)

Every good gamer needs a selection of joysticks suitable for any situation. Of course, not every gamer has room for a dozen different sticks, so we'll restrain ourselves. For those multiplayer sports games, we just have to have Advanced Gravis's GriP System with a couple of joypeds. The digital GriP supports up to 16 sticks under Windows 95, but can also emulate standard analog joysticks.

Major Mac

Okay, Mac-heads, we haven't forgotten about you completely. Now you're ready to step into the big leagues—the latest multimedia, fully "gameable" Mac. You're ready to see Dark Forces really move, and you want a system that will also be able to handle Copland, Apple's next-generation operating system, and Myst II next year. Basically, you want it all, which is what Mac users have come to expect.

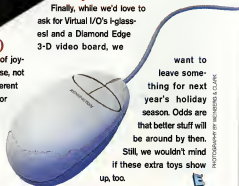
And at the high end, you've got to go for it: the Power Mac 8500 series with a 120MHz Power PC chip at its core. Its PCI bus will enable you to get at some of the cool new gaming-oriented graphics accelerators now being designed over in the PC marketplace. As 3-D hardware acceleration catches on, Mac owners with a PCI bus will be glad they made the extra investment (the 8500 will cost you around \$5,000). By the time you read this, you should also be able to add a DOS Compatibility card (about \$700) with 8MB of onboard RAM to the 8500, though currently no boards are available. If watching CNN while you play games is to your liking, Apple's new Video/TV system for the 8500 should do the trick for an extra \$279. Finally, you get the 8500's 64-bit VRAM and graphics acceleration, plus Apple's cool video system, which lets you capture quarter-screen video at 30 frames per second. Enjoy yourself. —David Gerding

Microsoft's SideWinder Pro is equally digital, and also emulates either ThrustMaster's Flight Control System or CH Products' FlightStick Pro in analog mode. But for serious flight sims, we need a Thrustmaster FLCS F-16 and a FLCS F-16 TQS with the new Windows-based programming interface. There's nothing quite like the real feel.

3-D, VR, and Other Ephemera

Finally, while we'd love to ask for Virtual I/O's I-glass-ess and a Diamond Edge 3-D video board, we

want to leave something for next year's holiday season. Odds are that better stuff will be around by then. Still, we wouldn't mind if these extra toys show up, too.



**The Dig
Official Player's Guide**

By Jo Ashburn

Join Commander Boston Low and his two companions in a spectacular science-fiction adventure that takes you from Earth to a planet that's light years from home. This guide gives you everything you need to safely pilot your crew back to Earth, including a complete walk-through, hints and tips, character profiles, and a comprehensive inventory of equipment.

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Platform:

IBM-PC, CD-ROM

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Official Player's Guide**

By Susan Frischer

To succeed in this incredibly realistic simulation of life on the LAPD's SWAT team, you must train, study tactics, and play it smart. Written in conjunction with the game's designers, this guide is the ultimate handbook for a new recruit. Inside you'll find a complete walk-through of all training and call-up scenarios, a catalog of SWAT equipment, and a comprehensive tactics chapter explaining real-life SWAT strategies. There's also an in-depth interview with former LAPD Chief Daryl Gates.

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Platform:

PC CD-ROM

**The Beast Within
A Gabriel Knight Adventure
Official Player's Guide**

By Corey Sandler

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\$19.99

BK-368

Platform:

PC CD-ROM

**Rebel Assault II
Official Player's Guide**

By Jeff Hoff

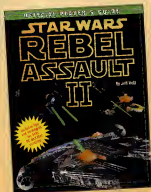
Can you survive 15 harrowing missions and foil Lord Vader's evil plot to destroy the Rebel Alliance? This guide is the ultimate copilot for the latest Star Wars adventure. It includes tips and strategies, cheat codes, a complete discussion of how to use the Difficulty Editor, and a thorough look at the making of this CD-ROM masterpiece.

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connecting to Win 95 Web sites,
and finding a better way to do DOS.

Making Modems Shut Up

How can I get my modem to stop making noise? It's really annoying whenever I connect to an online service and have to listen to that strange beeping hiss.

Bob McIlamara
Dallas, TX

Tired of waking up the wife with those midnight online sessions, eh? You're in luck. Most access software for online services has a check box in its modem-configuration screens that lets you turn off your modem's speaker.

If your service has overlooked this handy feature, you can get around the problem by talking to your modem directly using an "AT" command.

AT commands are the basic language used to tell your modem what to do. For example, using a basic terminal-emulation package, you can type "ATDT5551212" to directly tone dial the phone number 555-1212. There are tons of other AT commands, and one of them, the "M" command, controls your modem's speaker.

To turn off your modem's speaker entirely, find out where your terminal-emulation package or online-service software keeps its modem initialization line or "startup string." (Check the software's online help or manual if you have to.) Then, insert the command M0 (M-zero) into the string. Be careful not to overwrite any information already in the string, or you could prevent your modem from connecting! Write down the original line so you can type it back in if you make a mistake. Save the set-up changes and start up your software.

Voilà! Your speaker should now be off when you dial. If you want to turn it on again, change the "0" to a "1."

You may want to check your modem's manual to see what other M commands exist for it. Some modems simply use the numbers for various volume levels, while others use them to turn on special speaker features, such as leav-

ing the sound on only until a carrier tone is detected.

Where's Windows 95 on The Web?

Can you recommend a good World Wide Web site for Windows 95 information? I'm always interested in getting the most up-to-date info that I can.

Don Linford
Address Unavailable

worked just fine under DOS 6.2.

Help!
Kurt James
Hoboken, NJ

Well, Microsoft doesn't make much of an issue about this (it apparently doesn't want anyone to know just how close Windows 95 really is to DOS), but yes, you can. Be warned, however, that you have to edit a critical Windows 95 file. It's not difficult, but novices might want to ask a computer-literate friend to help.

From Windows 95, follow these steps.

- 1) Double-click on My Computer.
- 2) Look for the MSDOS.SYS file in the root directory.
- 3) Right-click on it, then select Properties from the menu.
- 4) At the bottom of the Properties screen, click off the Read-only and Hidden check boxes.
- 5) Close the Properties box.
- 6) Open the Notepad in Accessories on the Startup menu.

7) Open the MSDOS.SYS file in Notepad.
8) Add the line `BootMulti=1` under the Options heading (be sure to use the exact case).

Now, when you start your computer, press and hold the F8 key after the memory check. You'll be offered a chance to select from a number of boot options. Select "Previous version of MS-DOS" from the menu, and you're back to where you started!

You can also change the `BootGUI=1` line to `BootGUI=0` to prevent the Windows 95 graphical interface from appearing at all. You'll start at what amounts to the MS-DOS 7.0 command prompt, and you'll have more free conventional memory in which to run your DOS games. You can always start the Windows 95 interface at any point by typing "Win" and pressing Enter.

Play It Loud

My new sound card says it has a built-in amplifier. So when I get speakers for it, can




Oh, so the SOS guy isn't good enough for you, eh?

Weeeeilll, okay, I'll still give you a good place to visit. Check out the Windows 95 Question-Answer-Information-Database (QAID) at <http://www.whidbey.net/~mdixon/win40001.htm>. This database contains hundreds of tips and hints, from the mundane to the arcane. You can even download a stand-alone version of the database to run on your PC.

Also take a look at the Windows 95 page at <http://www.elektrek.com/win95.html>. This page has links to two dozen other Windows 95-related Web sites. One of them should have what you want.

Teaching an Old DOS New Tricks

Can I run my old version of DOS under Windows 95? I've had some problems running older games in a DOS window or in MS-DOS mode. I know they



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I avoid speakers that include amplifiers? They all seem to be really cheesy or really expensive. Even better, couldn't I just attach my old stereo speakers to the card and have them work fine?

Jeff Miller
Green Bay, WI

When sound card companies tell you that their cards have a "built-in amplifier," they are often using the term rather optimistically. You see, the inside of a computer is hardly an ideal place to store a piece of equipment whose main job is to amplify electronic signals. As a result, attaching just about any decent powered speakers to the "Line Out" instead of the "Speaker" connection on your card should result in much clearer sound.

If you're intent on using the built-in amplifier, that's okay. Just don't bother attaching those old sound boxes that you didn't want to use with your stereo anymore. Standard stereo speakers (particularly older ones) are rarely magnetically shielded. As a result, putting them next to your monitor will make the screen look like it spent too much time on Haight-Ashbury in the '60s.

Psychedelic, man.

Thanks to reader John Ehrmann for providing some of this SOS information concerning multitasking in Windows 95.

Got a hot tip that you'd like to share with other game and multimedia fans around the country? Send it to SOS at any of the addresses listed below. We'll try to run your tip and give you credit so others will know how smart you are. If we use your tip, you'll get a free one-year magazine and CD-ROM subscription to *Electronic Entertainment*.

Fax, mail, or e-mail your queries to the SOS staff at:

- *Electronic Entertainment*
951 Mariner's Island Blvd.,
Suite 700, San Mateo, CA 94404
- Fax: 415-349-7781
- CompuServe: 73361,263
- America Online: ElecEnt
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Sorry, but we can't send personal responses to every question.

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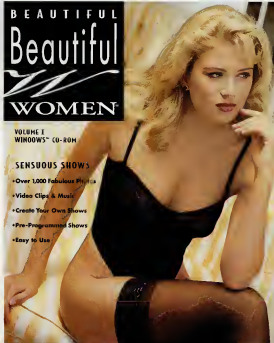
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Marmel

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Be a Drag Queen In Cyberspace

Hey, guys! Tired of going on America Online and not being able to get anybody to chat with you? The men are too busy trying to get GIF files of women and the women too jaded from sleazy solicitations to give you the time of day, right? Well, do what millions of men all across America are doing...Wong Foo yourself: Go online as a woman!

Here's my exclusive Do's-and-Don'ts Guide for creating an unwaveringly perfect female AOL persona.

Screen Name: Choose something common, like Suzanne289. Don't try to oversex yourself, because nothing screams "I'm a guy" more than a screen name like Candi, or Barbi, or anything with XXXs in it (like, say, VIXXXen). At best, nobody will talk to you. At worst, you'll get unsolicited e-mail from your local congressman.

Member Name: Don't forget to change this. If your screen name is Suzanne289,

you don't want your member name revealing your real name...Ralph. And, for God's sake, pick a believable last name.

Unless you're the nutball who was shaving his fingerprints off in *Seven*, a last name like Doe just ain't gonna cut it.

Location: Pick a locale you know well. If you enter Madison, Wisconsin, and somebody asks what school you went to and you name a place in St. Paul, Minnesota...consider yourself busted.

Your Age: Lie about it. Telling the truth about how old you are is a dead giveaway that you are not a woman.

Marital Status: Single, or if you really want to send that devil-may-care attitude, throw out "divorced."

Occupation: Don't lie here. Just make what you do sound cool. Janitors become "sanitation engineers," lawyers become

"veracity technicians," marketing types become "image adjustment managers."

Just because you read *Microserfs* doesn't mean you can bluff your way through a conversation with somebody after claiming to be a "bug checker for Microsoft in Building 7."

So there you go. Men will talk to you, give you online tips and trade information with you! Women will return your Instant Messages! Sure, you can never meet them (unless you enjoy *dragging* as a woman), but hey, it's all in good fun, right? Now remember, use this knowledge for good... not evil.



Who knows, you might be chatting with Wesley.

Celebrity Screen Names

Sure, we've all heard the rumors—celebrities roaming the Net under aliases. Usually, they're under deep cover, but sometimes, just sometimes, their screen names give them away...

Rush Limbaugh: 2Fat2Fit
Melanie Griffith: Bimbot
RuPaul: No2Str8
Bill Gates: GigaNerd
Howard Stern: Nsg8tr
Kato Kaelin: Toady40J
Calvin Klein: Ped0File

Computer Culture

The *Washington Post* recently listed some hypothetical viruses that might infect your PC. Here are a few of their choicest strains:

◆ **Oprah Winfrey virus:** Your 200 megabyte hard drive suddenly shrinks to 80 megabytes, and then slowly expands back to 200.

◆ **Adam and Eve virus:** Takes a couple of bytes out of your Apple.

◆ **Ted Turner virus:** Colorizes your monochrome monitor.

◆ **Government economist virus:** Nothing works, but all your diagnostic software says everything is fine.

◆ **Federal bureaucrat virus:** Divides your hard disk into hundreds of units, each of which does practically nothing, but all of which claim to be the most important part of your computer.

Of course, we came up with a few of our own:

◆ **Rabbi Virus:** Prevents

your computer from working from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday—and finally snips the end off your power cord.

◆ **Sam Nunn-for-President Virus:** Your computer simply refuses to run.

◆ **Ross Perot Virus:** Causes your computer to launch an alternative operating system.

◆ **Bill Bradley Virus:** Your computer's logic board gets fed up and quits out of the system.

◆ **Geraldo Virus:** Coats your screen with a slime that even Windex 95 can't remove.

◆ **Melrose Place Virus:** Every Monday night your computer runs a bunch of stupid self-referential subroutines that look great but lead nowhere.



Illustration by Dave Coverly

Steve Marmel, a Los Angeles-based stand-up comedian, can be harassed via email at marmel13@aol.com.

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